

No. 42

5 CENTS

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S FLYING WEDGE

OR HOW KIRTLAND WON THE GAME FOR CRANFORD



BY MAURICE STEVENS

There was no such thing as stopping that irresistible flying wedge, and consequently Jack was borne through the ranks of the enemy with a rush.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1905, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by THE WINNER LIBRARY CO., 165 West Fifteenth St., New York, N. Y.

No. 42.

NEW YORK, November 25, 1905.

Price Five Cents.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S FLYING WEDGE;

OR,

How Kirtland Won the Game for Cranford.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, but a good friend of Jack's.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *jiu-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Phil Kirtland, a rival of Jack's, but who is not averse to winning a little glory at times, even if he has to share it with Lightfoot.

Jubal Marlin, one of Jack's friends, with a Yankee love for making money.

Katie Strawn and **Nellie Conner**, two Cranford girls, friends of Jack.

Reel Snodgrass, claiming to be a nephew of the banker.

Delancy Shelton, a dude who had "money to burn."

Ben Nelson, **Kid Casey**, members of the Tidewater eleven, and who were willing to win their game by fair means or foul.

CHAPTER I.

DELANCY'S SCHEME.

It came about through the belief of Delancy Shelton that money can buy almost anyone.

Delancy was in the town of Tidewater, and was seated in an upper room at one of the hotels, talking with Ben Nelson, who had lately become a member of the Tidewater eleven, and was said to be one of its best players.

Nelson's thoughts ran naturally to football, and football was the subject of the talk.

Cranford had defeated Highland but the week before, in one of the closest and most picturesque games of the season.

"These other elevens would have some show," said Delancy, "if it wasn't for Jack Lightfoot. There's a peculiar thing, or influence, or something, y' know, about that fellah. Reel says it's hypnotism, and I'm—aw—almost of the same opinion."

"Hypnotism?" said Nelson, lifting his dark eyebrows.

Delancy fiddled with his little cane, twisting it round his slim legs and through his long, slim fingers.

"Not in the—aw—ordinary sense, y' know! I don't mean that. But a sort of—aw—hypnotic influence, y' know."

"I don't think I understand you."

"Well, it's a deuced queer thing, don't y' know! Those fellahs at Cranford will fight like cats and dogs among themselves, and they'll fight Lightfoot, too, y' know. Yet when they get together, as in this Cranford eleven, with Jack as the captain, why, he seems to weld them right together. They stop their quarreling, y' know, and all do just as he says."

"He must be a good captain!"

"He is, don't y' know; though I don't like him."

"Why don't you like him?"

The question was so pointed that Delancy's thin face flushed. He fidgeted and twisted the cane across his knees.

"Chiefly on account of Reel, y' know," he said, evasively. "I'd like to see Reel captain of that eleven. He mightn't do as well as Jack, but I'd like to see him have a chance at it. He's a deuced clevah fellah, and a mighty good friend, y' know."

"Would he have a chance if Jack was out of the way?"

"I think he would."

"He's the next most popular to Jack, is he?"

Delancy hesitated.

"Well, aw, I don't know as to that. There's Phil Kirtland. He's pretty well liked by a certain crowd, y' know."

For a long time Delancy had been wishing that his friend, Reel Snodgrass, might have a chance to show what he could do as captain of an eleven, or a nine, or something of the kind; but the chance seemed never likely to come.

"If Jack was temporarily out of the game, I suppose your friend would have a chance for the captaincy?" said Nelson.

"I think he would, y' know. I think it might be worked."

"Could Jack be bought?"

Delancy laughed cynically.

"Any fellah can be bought, y' know, if the price is big enough."

This happened to be Nelson's belief, also; so they were in accord here.

"Why not buy Jack Lightfoot off, then?"

"I couldn't approach him, y' know, because he doesn't like me, but you might do it, if you went about it right."

An exclamation escaped him.

"Ah! bah Jove, there he is now."

He pointed with his cane from the window.

"The very two fellahs we were talking about, don't y' know—Jack Lightfoot and Phil Kirtland. Likely they're over here to see about that game that's to be played."

Ben Nelson stepped to the window.

"Which is Jack Lightfoot?"

Delancy pointed with his cane.

"That one; the handsomer of the two, y' know."

They were gone, round the corner, and out of sight almost instantly; but Ben Nelson had been given a good look; and he had made a singular mistake. The handsomer of the two fellows, in his estimation, was Phil Kirtland, and Phil's face and figure were fixed in his mind as those of Jack Lightfoot.

Nelson dropped back into his chair and looked earnestly into Delancy's rather weak face.

"I suppose you're very much interested in having Reel Snodgrass given a chance to go to the head of the football class and show what he can do?"

"I'd give money to accomplish it, don't y' know," answered Delancy, who was always willing to spend money for Reel, or any other close friend; notwithstanding that Reel continuously and systematically swindled him at poker and in every other way, in order to get money out of him.

With many weak and bad traits, there were some good points in Delancy. That was one of them. He was always willing to go to the limit in assisting anyone whom he liked well. And his friendship for Reel was warm and sincere, in spite of the fact that Reel's friendship for him was based on a desire to get all the money he could out of him.

"Jack Lightfoot's poor?" questioned Nelson.

"Poor as poverty!" said Delancy, with a sneer.

"And in spite of it as proud as Lucifer!"

"But if I've read my Milton right, Lucifer sold himself. If I had a couple hundred dollars I'd try Lightfoot with it. I've got only fifty that I can spare, though. Would a hundred dollars tempt him?"

He shot a sidelong glance at his companion, and saw Delancy flush eagerly.

"If you can buy that fellow off for just one game, I'll put a hundred dollars into the pot myself!"

"You will?"

"I will."

"Gads, I'll try him!"

"I mean it!" said Delancy.

And to show that he did, he produced his pocketbook and took a hundred dollars from it. It was a well-filled pocketbook, and Ben Nelson eyed it with interest.

He placed the money in Nelson's hands.

"Any fellah can be bought, y' know, if he's approached right. That's my opinion. Put whatever you want to with that, and strike Jack Lightfoot with it. I know he's hard up. Not many weeks ago I bought a handsome boat from him for a song, don't y' know, just because he was in such deuced need of money. He sold me a boat for seventy-five that was worth over two hundred. The family's pretty close run. And that's what makes me so hot. To have him poor as a church mouse and still think he's better than I am. Why, it's positively insulting, don't y' know!"

"I'll try him with this," said Nelson, shoving the money into his pocket.

Delancy had known Nelson for some time, in another town, and felt sure that in this matter Nelson could be trusted to use the money as he had said. In truth, Nelson had no other thought. He did not much need money for himself.

"I'll hunt him up before that game comes off and fix him," he promised, confidently. "Two hundred would be pretty good wages, for abstaining from one game, don't you think? It would catch a good many fellows, I know, when they get nothing at all for playing. I'd be glad to favor Reel. I liked him, that time I met him. And I hope he can work himself up to the head, if Lightfoot gets out of the way temporarily. You can help him in that?"

"I'm sure I can."

Delancy looked confident.

As a student at the academy, having the favor of Prof. Sanderson and a good many others, he felt that his influence was considerable. He was not a member of the eleven. Personally, he was not physically fitted for strenuous athletics, and did not attempt even to get a position on the academy eleven; but Reel was ambitious for football and athletic honors.

"I can give him a boost," he said, confidently. "Reel's clevah; and if Jack could be got out of the way he'd have a chance."

"If Kirtland could be put out of the same game, I suppose he'd be sure of the captaincy?"

"I think he would."

"Maybe I could work Kirt."

"It would be harder to buy Kirtland. He's got money himself, plenty of it; the Kirtlands and the

Strawns are the wealthiest people in the town, with perhaps the exception of Tom Lightfoot's father."

"Tom is Jack's cousin?"

"Yes."

"Why don't Jack get help from them?"

"He's too proud, y' know. He wants to feel independent, I suppose."

"Ah! I see. Doesn't want to be under obligations to anyone."

"That's about it, I guess. I think that's it."

"Well, it's nice to feel independent."

"But a fellah can't, y' know, when he hasn't any money."

"That's so, too. A fellow without money is every man's servant. Well, I'll try him. I'll scrape together a hundred, and make my offer two hundred. I could make it even more. Would you raise your offer, if I find that two hundred isn't enough?"

"Bah Jove, I will!" declared Delancy. "I'll make it another hundred, if it's necessary."

"Gad, I'll try him! If he can be bought, I'll buy him, for just one game, anyway. Of course there'll have to be some plan by which he might make his friends see that he couldn't help dropping out of the game. But that can be arranged."

CHAPTER II.

BEN NELSON'S MISTAKE.

Two evenings later, just at nightfall, Phil Kirtland was walking along the street, in Cranford, on his way home.

Phil was a handsome youth, as Ben Nelson had noted from that upper window in Tidewater. Dark of complexion, with fine eyes and a clear dark skin, he carried his head erect, his shoulders well back, and always dressed neatly and becomingly.

As he thus walked along he heard a voice behind him, and, turning, saw Ben Nelson.

"Hello, Lightfoot!" Ben called, in a low tone.

Phil stared.

Ben Nelson had been pointed out to him in Tidewater, though personally he had not met him; yet he knew that Nelson was the new player on whom Tidewater depended for great things.

He stopped, waiting for Nelson to come up. He saw that Nelson had mistaken him for Jack or Tom Lightfoot, and was about to correct this erroneous impression, when Nelson spoke again, using that same low tone.

"I want just a word with you, in regard to that

game, you know. You're the captain of the eleven, I believe?"

He came close up to Phil, looking him in the face.

"What I've got to say is very private. Could we go somewhere for a little talk?"

Phil checked his desire to enlighten this Tidewater player. Something in that tone, and in Ben Nelson's manner, told him that this private talk might reveal things well worth knowing; and for an instant a suspicion that something might be revealed against Jack, if he kept quiet, flashed across his mind. As is well known, he did not altogether like Jack.

"What is it you want to say?" he asked. "Is there any reason why it can't be said right here?"

"I don't care to talk on the street," said Nelson, cautiously. "It's a little private consultation about that game to be played with Tidewater."

"Oh, yes, I see!"

Phil's eyes flashed.

"Well, I was just on my way to—to my uncle's, and if you will go with me, we can go up to a room I use there, and talk as long as we want to."

"Your uncle's? Oh, yes, Tom Lightfoot's home! I've heard of him. We'd be quite secure there?"

Phil turned away his flushed face, fearing it would betray him.

"Sure thing!" he said. "There isn't any place we'd be safer."

"Lead the way, then."

"I was just going there."

Ben hooked his arm confidently in Phil Kirtland's, and walked on with him.

"You were pointed out to me on the street at Tidewater the other day, and I fixed your face so well in my mind that I knew you as soon as I saw you."

"Oh, I was?"

"Yes. You were with Phil Kirtland at the time, and you were over there making some arrangements about the football game to be played there the day before Thanksgiving."

"Ah! I see. Who pointed me out to you?"

"Delancy Shelton."

"Ah! I see."

"Delancy doesn't like you very well."

"Why did he take the trouble to point me out, then?"

"I'll tell you that when we're alone together in that room."

Phil's head seemed whirling round like a top. This whole mistake of Ben Nelson's was so topsy-turvy that he found it hard to adjust himself to it at once.

"Did Delancy have anything to say about—Phil Kirtland?"

"I'll tell you about that, when we get to the room."

"Well, here we are."

Phil was in front of his own home, but on the side street, instead of the front one from which he usually entered. On the door facing that front street was a name plate which he did not want Ben Nelson to see; so had conducted him to this side entrance.

"Is Tom in?" Nelson asked, cautiously.

Phil wanted to laugh.

"N-no; he isn't in just now."

"Then we'll be all right for a safe little talk."

"Don't be afraid that we'll be troubled."

Phil was anxious now lest his mother should see him and call him by name, and so "knock the fat into the fire." Therefore, he opened the side door softly, and as softly led the way upstairs.

Ben Nelson looked about with admiration, when shown by Phil into his room. It was handsomely, even lavishly, furnished.

"Your cousin Tom must be rather a swell dog," he observed.

Phil laughed. He had got control of himself and began to feel easier.

"Yes, he is; this is his room. I come over and use it whenever I want to."

"Nice to have a cousin like that."

"Rather."

"Pretty well off, I suppose?"

He looked about the room curiously, walking toward the dresser, with its big mirror.

"Yes, rather."

"Gee!" he was looking down at the manicure set on the dresser. "Something of a swell, I take it?"

Phil laughed again. This was as good as a comedy.

"Oh, I don't know! He likes to take good care of himself, that's all."

"Feels he's getting old enough to shave, but uses a safety razor. Barber shops are too common for him, I suppose. Or, perhaps, this is something you use?"

"Yes, I use it sometimes. No danger of barber's itch, if you shave yourself."

Nelson turned round and looked at Phil, who was now smiling.

"No offense, I hope? It's none of my business, of course, what your cousin Tom does."

At that instant Phil was thrown into a chill of apprehension. He heard his mother at the foot of the stairs, and he expected that she would speak his name.

"Are you up there?" she called.

"Yes," Phil answered.

"Oh, all right, then!"

She went away, and Phil breathed easier.

Ben Nelson was studying him closely; and it struck him now that for a young fellow who was as poverty-stricken as Delancy Shelton said, Phil dressed rather elegantly. He noted the well-made and neatly pressed trousers; the clean white linen, cuffs and collars; the well-fitting coat; and the expensive soft hat, which Phil had tossed down carelessly.

"Oh, I guess he takes money from Tom's folks, in spite of what Shelton said!" was his conclusion. "I can buy him, all right."

Phil had turned on the gas and lighted it. A pleasant wood fire crackled in the grate, making the room warm and cozy.

He sat down now, and Nelson did the same. Phil was still wondering if Jack Lightfoot had communicated by mail, or in some other way, with this fellow, and was anxious for the revelation hinted at.

"Have a cigarette?" Nelson invited, taking out a box and pushing it toward Phil, hoping thus to pave the way for the confidential talk.

"No, thanks," Phil answered.

"Don't use them?" he asked, elevating his dark brows.

"I never happened to get into the habit."

"Well, it's a bad habit; but it seems to have become a necessity to me. You don't mind if I smoke?"

"Not at all."

He lighted his cigarette and poured a cloud of smoke through his thin nostrils.

"Funny how a habit like this gets fastened on a fellow!"

He again looked earnestly at Phil.

"They tell me, Lightfoot, that you're a crackerjack."

Phil flushed. He never liked praise of Jack, since Jack was, and long had been, his rival in the athletic world of Cranford. Yet he said:

"That's good! Who says it?"

"Oh, I've heard it everywhere."

"That's good."

"Delancy Shelton for one; he thinks that you and Phil Kirtland and Reel Snodgrass are the three best ever."

"I'll have to thank Delancy for that."

Nelson was wondering how he could get to the point which had brought him over there.

"I suppose Delancy doesn't think quite so much of Phil Kirtland?" Phil questioned.

"He thinks Phil and Reel are about on a par."

Phil smiled grimly.

"Oh, he does?"

"And that you're the king pin!"

"Good for Delancy! I thought he'd put Reel at the top of the heap, and I'm surprised that it's—er—me."

"He'd like to see Reel at the top of the heap. He'd pay good money to bring that about."

"Oh, he would?"

"Sure thing, Lightfoot. And money talks, you know!"

"Yes, money's all right."

"I'd like to have all I could use of it."

"So would I."

He again studied Phil's face, clouding his own as he did so with the tobacco smoke.

"You wouldn't care to favor Reel in any way, I suppose? Delancy thinks you don't like him."

"What makes Delancy think that?"

"He says you've had trouble with him."

"And yet Delancy knows that—I—tried to get Reel into the academy—I mean into the high-school athletic club, and on the high-school gym. If I dislike him so, how does he account for that?"

"Oh, he's generous enough to admit that you're willing to put good material into the eleven, no matter where it comes from."

"Oh, he is?"

"Delancy's a pretty nice fellow, I take it."

"Oh, yes, I suppose he's all right—for those who like him."

He laughed, but could hardly keep the bitterness out of it.

"I can see *you* don't like him. And yet you ought to have heard how he flattered you, about a good many things."

"Thanks!" said Phil, dryly. "I didn't know Delancy thought so much of—me."

"He thinks you're all right, Lightfoot. Yet, because he fears you don't like him, he——"

He stopped, sucked at his cigarette, and did not finish the sentence.

"So Delancy wants Reel to be at the top of the heap?" said Phil.

"Bad."

"What's he willing to do to bring that about?"

Nelson drew his chair nearer and lowered his voice.

"He's willing to pay handsomely for any favors shown Reel."

"Oh, that so? Well, that's kind of him, I'm sure."

"Yes. Money's no object with Delancy, you know."

"He's thrown away a good deal of it, since he's been here."

"And is willing to throw away more. In this matter, for instance, he'd be willing to pay you something handsome, you know, if you'd contrive to get out of the way in just one game—this next game—and give Reel a show."

Phil flushed.

"He thinks that—I would sell out, does he?"

"Don't put it that way. No, he doesn't think you'd sell out."

He settled back and again poured a cloud of smoke through his nostrils. This was ticklish business, and he feared he might bungle it.

"You're the captain of the eleven, you know?"

"Yes."

Phil did not consider this a straight-out lie. He was captain of the academy eleven.

"I don't want to flatter you," said Nelson, laying his hand confidentially and approvingly on Phil's knee, "but Delancy Shelton thinks you're some kind of a wizard. He says that no matter how the fellows here quarrel among themselves, when they get into an eleven under you they lay everything aside and fight as if they were one man."

"That isn't for—not for me, you know," Phil urged. "We fight for Cranford—for the Cranford honor. Delancy doesn't seem to understand——"

"He may be a little dense on that point; but still he thinks, Lightfoot, that you're a wonder in that way."

"Kind of him, I'm sure!" said Phil, hardly able to hide the hidden sneer.

Nelson again took time for thought.

"What's his plans for Reel?" Phil asked, willing to help the thing along, and even hurry it a bit if he could.

"As I said, I believe, he thinks if you were out of the way in one game Reel would have a chance to shine—he might even be made captain for that game."

"What about—er—Kirtland? Wouldn't he be likely to come in next after Jack—I mean after myself, of course. There are a lot of fellows here who think that Kirtland is a better athlete than I am in every way, and would make a better captain."

"Delancy doesn't think so."

"Oh, he doesn't! He's a judge, I suppose?"

It was hard for him to conceal the sneer; yet Nelson was so taken with the belief that this was Jack Lightfoot that he failed to notice it.

"He thinks Reel is as good as Kirtland, or even better. I rather believe he thinks he's better. He

wants him to have a show. And then, besides, some way might be found to get Kirtland out of this same game, if you'd consent to give Reel a show."

"Ah!"

"That's what he thinks."

"Shelton is a clever fellow."

"That's what he is. And he's got money—and is willing to spend it."

Phil looked at him with flashing, dark eyes.

"Just what are you driving at Nelson?"

Nelson tried to laugh.

"Don't get peppery, if it doesn't suit you! But Delancy is willing to put good money into your fist, if you'll contrive in some way to keep out of that next game."

"And—Kirtland?"

"Delancy will look out for that. He's more afraid of you?"

"Ah! he is?"

"A good deal more afraid of you."

"What's he willing to do?"

"That's business, Lightfoot. I'm glad you're willing to talk this thing over. A little money is mighty handy to have, you know. A fellow doesn't get a cent for playing those games; and if he could be paid handsomely for keeping out of just one of them, why it might stand him in hand to think about it. And, anyway," he went on, proceeding to argue it, "there wouldn't be much chance of Cranford losing in the whole series, for she's already pretty well ahead already, you know. She's been sweeping the field, you see?"

"I understand."

"Well, now, how would two hundred dollars look to you?"

Phil flushed.

"You'll give me two hundred to stay out of the game?"

"That's what I will!"

"When am I to have it?"

Nelson pulled out some bills.

He lowered his voice, as he slipped the money through his fingers.

"I can pay you a hundred down; and if you contrive to keep out of the game, you're to have a hundred more after it's played."

"Delancy gave you this money?"

"A hundred of it. I'm putting up the other."

"And how do you expect to get it back?"

"Well, if you're out, I'm going to lay some bets on Tidewater winning."

"Ah! I see."

"From all I can learn, it would be a cinch, if we had both you and Kirtland out of the way."

"Why don't you try to—bribe Phil Kirtland?"

"Delancy says he couldn't be bought easily."

"And he thinks that—that I could?"

"He says you—— Well, I shouldn't call it buying, you see. We'll just say that it's a little favor given you for keeping out of the game."

"But he thinks that—that Kirtland is more honest than I am?"

"No, he didn't say that."

"Well, go on."

"Do you want this hundred, and a hundred more, just as—as a little favor, you know?"

Phil thought a moment. His face was a curious study. He was wondering what Jack Lightfoot would do under these circumstances. He could not bring himself to believe that Jack would accept a bribe, except—as he meant to do himself—for the purpose of trapping the would-be briber.

"What am I to do? And what if the thing should become known?"

"I've planned that all out. I'm ready to tell you, if you're ready to accept my offer."

"Go ahead."

"You accept the offer?"

"Let me have the plan first."

"Well, I've thought you could come to Tidewater the afternoon before the game. You can do it all right, for there's to be no school, I understand. The game's to be on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving. I'll arrange with some fellows to jump on you. They'll pretend to hammer you up, but they'll not hurt you. You're to put up a bluff of having been hurt so that you can't go into the game. You can claim that your wrist is hurt, or your ankle twisted; anything you like, you see."

"And about Kirtland?"

"Something can be planned up for him between now and then."

Phil sat staring at him. He was naturally most anxious to know what would be done to Kirtland.

"I'll do it," he said, suddenly.

Nelson dropped the money—one hundred dollars—into his hand.

"The other hundred after the game."

"You're afraid I might not stay out of it, if you paid all in advance?"

"We have to make sure of these things."

Now that Jack Lightfoot had, as he thought, ac-

cepted the "bribe," Ben Nelson was not so particular as to his choice of words. The supposed Jack Lightfoot had been wonderfully lowered in his estimation. If the bribe had been refused, he would have thought much more of him. People who are willing to give bribes always have a low opinion of the tools they use.

"I'll be there!" said Phil, breathing hard, and thrusting the hundred into his pocket.

"And don't forget that you'll get the other hundred!" said Nelson, almost insolently.

Phil rose. His face was very red, for he was not accustomed to being addressed in that tone.

"I'll not forget it!"

Ben Nelson got up at the same time, to leave the room.

"Lightfoot, it's money that makes the world go round, as you've discovered!"

He spoke cynically.

"Right you are," Phil assented. "You've found that I like a little money as well as the next fellow. Well, that's all right. I'm rather glad that you've found it out. I'll be after that other hundred."

He opened the door, and went to the foot of the stairs with Nelson, letting him out there.

"I'll see you again, Lightfoot!"

"Yes, good-by; and keep the thing still."

"Don't be afraid I won't."

He slipped out and was gone.

Phil's mother appeared.

"What did he mean by calling you Lightfoot?"

Phil chuckled.

"He thinks I'm Jack Lightfoot, and he's been bribing me."

"Bribing you?"

"He thinks he's been bribing me. Look at that."

He showed the money.

"That was to have gone to Jack?" she asked.

"He thought he was giving it to Jack. It's about the football game. He's from Tidewater, and is one of their eleven."

"Would Jack accept a bribe?"

"I hope not. But I've saved him the trouble. I've taken it for him."

"And what are you going to do with it?"

"I don't know yet. I must have time to think about it."

"Well, if that isn't the strangest thing!"

He faced toward his mother.

"Do I look like Jack Lightfoot?"

"Not in the least."

"Well, I thought not. But that fellow got us mixed. He thinks I'm Jack Lightfoot."

"What a queer mistake," said his mother. "I never thought Jack would take a bribe."

CHAPTER III.

WHAT FOLLOWED.

After thinking the thing over, and taking a whole night "to sleep on the subject," Phil Kirtland decided to tell Jack.

If there was one thing more than another on which Phil prided himself it was that he always "played fair."

That he had not played fair with Ben Nelson was Nelson's fault, he argued, rather than his own.

He was self-deceived, though, in thinking he had always played fair with Jack Lightfoot. He had done several things that could hardly be called honorable. He justified them by the belief that Jack had not always been strictly honorable with him. The state of warfare in which he and Jack now and then found themselves occasionally seemed to demand deceit.

But in this matter he thought he ought to go to Jack. He was himself threatened, as well as Jack.

He found Tom Lightfoot with Jack in the little shed room at Jack's home; and there he showed to them the hundred dollars given to him by Ben Nelson, and told his story, finding Jack and Tom both interested listeners.

The thing struck Jack in so humorous a way that he laughed heartily.

"That's the funniest thing I ever heard of!"

"It is funny," Kirtland admitted. "But what are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing. Just keep out of the way of those fellows."

"I wish I knew what they've got up their sleeve against me?" said Phil, nervously. "If a fellow knows what's to happen, he can be prepared for it; but I don't like the dark-lantern style of business."

"You worked him great!" Jack declared, with admiration. "What are you going to do with the money?"

"I don't know yet. It was intended for you, you know."

He looked at Jack critically.

"What would you have done, if he had not made that fool mistake, but had come to you?"

"I don't think I could have worked it as cleverly as you did. Likely I should have felt insulted, and then

would have got mad, and ended perhaps by kicking him out of the house. I'm glad he went to you, for now we've got him all twisted up."

"He's camping on the wrong trail, all right," said Tom, grimly.

"And if a fellow camps on the wrong trail, he's sure to go in the wrong direction. Say, we may get some fun out of this thing yet."

"What do you think of Delancy?" Tom asked of Phil. "You've been thinking rather well of him!"

"He's a bigger fool than I thought he was."

"I'm betting Reel Snodgrass doesn't know a thing about this."

"Because he would be too good for it?" Phil queried. "Nit—he wouldn't!"

"He wouldn't be too good for it, but I think he'd have too much sense."

"He's done tricks that were as silly," Jack declared.

"We'll have to go over to Tidewater the afternoon before the game, just to see what those fellows try to do," suggested Phil.

"It may be a good idea," Jack assented. "I'd rather like to see this thing through myself."

"And I," Tom agreed. "We'll put our fellows wise, and then move against Tidewater the day before the game. Say, we can get some great fun out of this!"

About the time that Phil was thus reporting and the three Cranford fellows were discussing the singular attempt at bribery, Ben Nelson was telling of his "success" to Kid Casey, known through the baseball season as the "Wizard Pitcher of the Four-Town League."

Casey was none too good for such a bit of bribery himself, yet it surprised him to be told that Jack Lightfoot had succumbed to Nelson's efforts.

He looked at Nelson quizzically.

"Wouldn't you feel funny, if you discover that Lightfoot was too shrewd for you?"

"In what way?" said Nelson, flushing.

"Well, he's got your hundred dollars! Suppose he doesn't carry out his part of the agreement?"

"If he doesn't he won't get the other hundred!"

"But he'll have the hundred you left with him! He'll be that much ahead. And he'll have the laugh on you."

"Is he that kind?"

"He's pretty long-headed. And it would be a great trick, if he worked you for that. I wouldn't mention it yet to any of the other members of the eleven. I'll keep mum, and you can blow your horn afterward, if it works."

"So, you think maybe I was the sucker?"

"I don't like the sound of it. Lightfoot doesn't have that reputation."

"Shelton thought so. And Jack took the money, all right."

"He'd take it, of course, if he was working you."

"If he was, I'll get even with him!"

Kid Casey laughed in an amused way.

"Jack Lightfoot's a sly dog. I'm afraid he sold you."

"I'll hammer his head off, if I find he did!"

"Just keep it still—that's my advice."

Ben Nelson kept it still, so far as communicating with the other members of the eleven were concerned, taking Casey's advice in this. And the mere thought that perhaps Jack had tricked him made him "sore."

So, instead of getting the mild-mannered fellows he had planned to get, who were to make but a pretense of "hammering" Jack, he got together some thugs of the town, and spent the most of the other hundred dollars in paying them to "pound to a pulp" Jack Lightfoot, as soon as he arrived in Tidewater.

CHAPTER IV.

COUNTER SCHEMING.

On the day following Phil Kirtland's surprising revelation, Jack Lightfoot, by apparent chance, encountered Delancy Shelton.

Delancy seemed to want to avoid him, and there was almost a look of fright in his pale blue eyes when Jack hailed him.

But Jack's manner, as he came up, was genial, and even jovial.

"Going over to the game?" he asked, in the most matter-of-fact way. "We're expecting to have a great time over there, and it will be worth seeing, in my opinion."

Delancy hesitated, toying with his cane.

"Well, yes," he admitted, "I rawther thought I'd take it in, don't y' know."

"That's good. Football's a great game, when it's played right."

"I rawther like it, y' know."

"I wonder you don't try for the academy eleven."

Delancy flushed with pleasure. He did not really care for the eleven, but it flattered him to think that anyone considered him good football material. He glanced down at his spindle legs, encased in neat-fitting trousers.

"I think I could run, don't y' know. I mightn't be so good in the rush line, though."

"But there's a lot of running to be done in football. Clever running is a big part of the game. I consider Wilson Crane one of our finest players. He isn't so heavy, but he's a wonderful runner."

Even Reel Snodgrass had never suggested to Delancy that he might be good football timber, and he felt immensely flattered. He began to think he had not appreciated Jack's discernment until now.

"If I had a chawnce, y' know, I might try it sometime," he admitted, feeling for the moment an unknown stir of football ambition.

"If you were in the high school, now!"

They walked on side by side, talking, and Delancy felt almost ashamed of that sneaking scheme he had entered into with Ben Nelson.

The next morning Jack met Delancy again, once more by apparent chance.

"If you're going over to the game, Delancy, and don't object, I'd like to ride over with you in your auto," he suggested.

Once upon a time Delancy had been much offended because Jack, in a case of necessity, had taken his automobile without permission, and had driven it hard.*

But many things had happened since then, and his opinion of Jack had materially changed.

"Why—aw——" he said, "it will be all right for you to, if you'd like to, don't y' know."

"Is Reel going with you?"

"I don't know."

"Well, if there's room, just consider me a member of your automobile party for that ride to Tidewater."

Delancy's auto, if not Delancy himself, was a great favorite with the girls of Cranford. So it did not surprise Jack when, on the afternoon before the day of the game, Delancy "tooled" his big machine down to Jack's house, with some young ladies perched in the tonneau.

They were Lily Livingston, Kate Strawn and Nellie Conner.

"Just room enough left for you and your sister, don't y' know," said Delancy, gayly.

"Thanks," said Jack, who had come out to the paling gate.

He darted back into the house to notify Daisy.

She was all ready, but had expected to go by another means of conveyance.

"How lovely of Delancy!" she exclaimed. "I really wouldn't have expected it of him. Tell him I'll be ready in just a minute."

She did not know of Jack's plans. He had not told

*See No. 24, "Jack Lightfoot's Mad Auto Dash."

her, for he was not sure she would approve of them. But he had resolved to turn the tables on Delancy if possible and teach him a much-needed lesson.

Nor had Jack told her of that scheme which had been uncovered by Phil Kirtland. This was chiefly because he knew that both Daisy and his mother would immediately begin to worry, if they dreamed that he was going into possible danger in visiting Tidewater. Jack did not consider the danger great, now that he was forewarned; but he knew they would think it great, and would be filled with unnecessary uneasiness.

Daisy's "minute" was five minutes long, but she came out after a while, arrayed for the trip, wearing a heavy jacket and furs, for the day was sharp and frosty.

Yet it was a glorious afternoon for such a ride as that now contemplated, and the mere thought of it flushed her cheeks with pleasure.

That Daisy did not especially like Delancy Shelton did not lessen her desire for that proffered ride in the automobile, especially as some of her girl friends were also going.

Jack and Delancy stood ready to assist her into the seat.

"Deuced charming, you are, this awfternoon, don't y' know!" said Delancy, doffing his cap when she appeared.

And when she flushed prettily, he began almost to wish that he had not taken that ungentlemanly step against Jack Lightfoot. It might be worth his while to become better acquainted with Jack's pretty sister; and, in doing that, it would be well, of course, to "stand in" with Jack himself.

That was a gay party, and a delightful ride, through the frosty air to Tidewater, the road lying for a great portion of the way by the beautiful lake, and then along the shores of Malapan River, which opened out into a tidal estuary as the town of Tidewater was approached.

After Tidewater was reached and the girls had been taken to their hotel, Jack accompanied Delancy while he drove the auto to a garage, and then walked with him about the town.

Jack kept so close to Delancy that the latter began to wonder after a while if there could be any meaning to it.

He had not seen Ben Nelson since that conference with him at the hotel, but a letter from Nelson had said that Jack was "fixed."

Once or twice it was almost on Delancy's tongue to hint of the matter to Jack, but he refrained through caution.

Now he desired to meet Nelson, and to meet him alone.

Finally Nelson was sighted, at the steps of the hotel, where he had come to meet Delancy.

Jack dropped back before Nelson "spotted" him, and Delancy hurried on alone, glad to be free for a little while.

"Hello!" said Nelson. "Been looking everywhere for you. Where you been?"

"Walking round with Jack Lightfoot."

"Gee! He was with you! When was that?"

"Just now."

Nelson had Phil Kirtland in his mind's eye, of course, when speaking of Jack, but Delancy did not know that; he supposed that Nelson had seen and talked with Jack.

"He came over with me in my auto, y' know; with some girls, y' know."

"The dickens! Did he speak of the bribe to you?"

"Not a word."

"But the fact that he's taken the bribe has made him friendly to you? Well, I suppose, naturally, that would be the result. Now that he knows the money's coming partly from you he'll be on more friendly terms with you; for, you see, he'll be wanting to get more. An itching palm gets worse all the time, Delancy."

The result of what he had planned and done came to Delancy suddenly in a new way. It occurred to him that perhaps, after all, he had taken the very course to get in with Jack Lightfoot. And his belief that everybody loves money and will take a bribe, if only they are approached right, grew stronger. He was thinking, too, of Jack's sister. Lately Lily Livingston had conducted herself very much as if she thought she owned Delancy, and he was beginning to weary of it.

"It would serve her right if I threw her over and took up with Daisy Lightfoot. Deuced pretty girl, don't y' know!"

He spoke half aloud, unconsciously.

"What was that?" said Nelson.

"Aw—just nothing at all, don't y' know."

"I thought you said something. Jack's ready to play his part, is he? Well, of course you haven't spoken to him about it. I wonder if I could get to see him soon? I wish he'd had come on with you. I'd like to explain to him how I've worked out the plan."

They were alone in one of the hotel corridors now.

He turned and looked Delancy full in the face.

"Shelton," he said, "I spoke of that little scheme of ours to a friend who knows Jack Lightfoot, and it's his opinion that Jack's playing double in this

game; that he'll keep that hundred I gave him, and not go through with his part of the agreement at all."

Delancy had another revulsion of feeling. Would Jack do that? And was that why he had clung so closely to him that day?

"Who is this friend?" he asked.

"I don't care to mention his name; but he knows Jack Lightfoot. He says Jack is smart, and that he'll throw us both down before we get through with it."

"I almost wish I hadn't gone into it, y' know."

He was thinking of Daisy.

"You're weakening?"

"No—aw—it isn't that."

"Well, I'm going to carry the thing through, now that I've gone into it. And you want to help your friend Reel, you see."

"Yes, I'd rawther like to help Reel."

He took out a cigarette nervously and lighted it. He fancied that a cigarette helped to soothe him when he was nervous.

"Well, I've got my money in it," said Nelson, "and I've laid some heavy bets on Tidewater. I can't afford to funk now. I've got to carry the thing through, and give Jack a chance to earn his money by pulling out of the game, and making it more certain that Tidewater will win."

He did not say to Delancy that he had hired thugs who were under instructions to pound Jack Lightfoot to a pulp.

CHAPTER V.

TURNING THE TABLES.

Jack Lightfoot knew how necessary it was to keep Ben Nelson deceived as to his identity; so, though he followed Delancy into the hotel, being but a few yards behind him, he kept a close watch to prevent Ben Nelson from seeing him.

Delancy and Ben had disappeared into the latter's room, and Jack heard the hum of their voices, though he could not make out what they were saying, a thing he was most anxious about.

As he passed along the corridor he beheld Mrs. Randolph Livingston, Lily's mother, who had come over from Cranford on the afternoon train, and had been at the hotel when Lily and her companions arrived.

Mrs. Livingston had little else to do but chaperon the girls wherever they went, and she did it willingly, and while at it contrived to throw Lily and Delancy together a great deal. She had an eye on Delancy's money, desiring her daughter to have something to

say about the handling of that money in the years to come.

She smiled on Jack amiably and hypocritically, as he appeared; then moved along the corridor.

"Is that your room?" Jack asked, in a low tone, pointing to the one she had come from.

It was next to the one from which that hum of voices issued.

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you mind if I go in there just a minute? My hair is all tumbled."

It was not often that Jack descended to deceit, but he was descending to it now as recklessly as any amateur detective.

"Not in the least," was her smiling answer.

Mrs. Livingston, whose manner toward Jack had once been haughty and condescending, seemed pleased to-morrow, but they'll not really hurt him."

Jack stepped joyfully into the room and closed the door after him.

Instantly he heard the talk in the other room, by applying his ear to the thin partition:

"You're to walk with Jack to the corner of Innes Street, and on some excuse send him across to the drug store that stands on the opposite corner. As he goes across, you're to say 'Hurrah for Cranford!' That will be about the time he is in the middle of the street, and you're to say it loud enough for the fellows who'll be there to hear you. Then they'll kick up some sort of a row with Jack, and pretend to pound him up, so that he can have an excuse for not going into the game to-morrow, but they'll not really hurt him."

The words came to Jack clearly, though not spoken loud, for the partition wall was thin.

Delancy was sucking nervously at his cigarette.

"Aw—why didn't you arrange it for *you* to go with him?" he grumbled.

He was still thinking of Daisy.

"Well, I've planned it that way, and I don't want to change it now. You've lost your courage. But there's not the slightest danger to you."

"But if he should twig, y' know?"

"He'll not. What's the matter with you, Shelton? You were crazy to go into this thing the other day. Now I've laid the plans and you'll have to help me to carry them out. Here, take a bracer! You need something."

He produced a bottle.

Jack heard the drawing of the cork, and knew that Delancy was taking a drink.

"I'll go through with it," Delancy promised. "When is this to be?"

"Just at dark, shortly after that street lamp there is lighted."

Jack had heard enough. He crept out of the room, and was glad he had not tarried, for he saw Mrs. Livingston coming, and she might have spoken his name.

He avoided her, and hastened downstairs and out into the street.

He left the hotel at once, and after a little searching found Innes Street, and located the street lamp there, and the drug store on the opposite corner. Then he began to think of what he should do.

"Delancy needs a lesson," was his thought. "Those fellows intend to make a bluff of attacking me, to give me an excuse to pretend to-morrow that I'm lame and can't go into the game. Well, even a bluff of an attack will be enough for Delancy. Let's see—how can I work it?"

Remaining away from the hotel, to make sure that he would not be seen by Ben Nelson—Phil Kirtland had already been instructed to remain away for the same reason—Jack went back to it just as the street lamps were being lighted.

In the meantime, Delancy had taken several other drinks, to keep the first company, and now felt again in a temper to carry the thing through to the end.

Jack made sure that Nelson was not near, before revealing himself.

"Bah Jove, where have you been?" Delancy demanded, coming toward him.

"Just loafing round. Come, take a walk."

He linked his arm through Delancy's, and they turned down the street, Delancy swinging his cane and smoking his cigarette.

"Where—aw—are you going?" Delancy queried.

"Just strolling around."

"Oh, yes, that's right; just strolling round, y' know!"

He looked at Jack craftily. His pale blue eyes were glittering and his cheeks were white. Drink always affected Delancy in that way.

"Money's a good thing, Lightfoot!" he said, insolently, as he turned with him toward Innes Street.

Jack laughed.

"I'd like to have all I could get of it."

"Bah Jove, stand in with me, Lightfoot, and you can wear diamonds."

"I hope you don't mean steel bracelets?"

"I've got money to burn, and I'm willing to burn it for my friends, y' know. Reel's my friend, and I

stand by him, y' know. I always stand by my friends. You ain't been my friend, Lightfoot."

"Have you been mine?"

"Naw, I haven't."

"Has it been my fault?"

"Well—aw—you seemed so deuced common, y' know, when I first met you. So deuced poor, y' know. A fellah cawn't be anything, if he's poor, y' know."

The insolent superciliousness of his tone was maddening.

"He can be honest and clean," Jack asserted, warmly.

"Don't go at that, Lightfoot. I know that you aren't any better than other folks, don't y' know, since you took that money." He sneered. "For all your high manners, you aren't any better than I am, y' know, or Reel. But that's all right, Lightfoot. I don't hold it against you, y' know. Been thinking about your sister, don't y' know."

Jack's face burned suddenly.

"What about her?" he asked, rather crisply.

"She's a stunner. I didn't realize, y' know, that she was so deuced handsome until to-day, y' know. I've got money, Lightfoot—money to burn."

"Yes?" said Jack, shaken by sudden disgust.

"Help me to stand in with your sister, Lightfoot, and just call on me for all the spending money you want."

He pulled out a ten-dollar bill.

"I don't want it," said Jack, hastily, pushing it away.

"Money makes the world go round, Lightfoot!"

"That's so, I suppose; but I don't want your money."

"No use o' us keeping secrets from each other any longer, Lightfoot. You like money just as much as I do. But you're going to earn it easy this time, y' know. They won't hurt you when they hammer you. Instructed not to, y' know."

They were at the Innes Street corner.

Jack for a moment hesitated. What he had contemplated and worked for up to this point seemed hardly right. But his temper had been rearoused by Delancy's insolence and outspoken contempt.

Jack's hesitation lasted for but an instant.

He slipped suddenly, as if his foot had struck a banana peel. Down he went on the sidewalk, with one leg doubled under him.

He groaned.

"Oh, gee! I've twisted my ankle! Delancy, hop over to that drug store as quick as you can and see if there's a doctor there."

Delancy hesitated, trying to help Jack to his feet.

"Go on, I tell you!" Jack shouted, as if in pain and anger.

Delancy started at a quick pace across the street.

Jack struggled to his feet, leaning against the side of the building, though he was not hurt to any extent. As he did so, four young fellows appeared round the corner.

"Is it him—is that the bloke?" they asked, speaking to Jack and nodding toward Delancy.

"Don't hurt him," Jack urged; "just thump him up a little. You understand. Give him a scare. Hurrah for Cranford!"

He spoke in a low tone.

"We understand, you bet!"

They leaped out into the street.

"Say, old sport, wait a minute!" one of them called to Delancy.

Delancy turned and saw them, and by instinct knew they were the fellows hired by Ben Nelson.

"Go back!" he whispered, waving his hand as they drew near. "The things off—it's not necessary now, y' know; he's already hurt his ankle."

The thug came straight on.

"Oh, it's off, is it?" he asked.

He came up to Delancy with a pugilistic hunch of his thick shoulders, his pals being right behind him.

"Go back, please!" Delancy urged. "I don't want him to know that I'm into this thing, y' know. Please go back, cawn't ye?"

"Can't we? Wow! We'll hit ye fer that—an extra one."

Then he drew off and landed a blow that caught Delancy over the eye and almost knocked him from his feet.

"We was told to hammer the daylights out of youse, an' we're the boys that obeys instructions to de letter—see? So 'ere you git it."

He gave Delancy a second punch in the face, which toppled off his hat.

Crowding close against him from the other side, another young ruffian landed a blow that knocked Delancy from his feet. A third struck him as he fell. Then they jumped at him, kicking him with their heavy shoes.

"Hi, there!" Jack yelled.

This was not what he had anticipated; and he sprang from the sidewalk and started for the young toughs who were handling Shelton so roughly.

"Help!" Delancy began to bawl.

"Call de police, will ye? Take dat—an' dat—and dat!"

Their toes rained on Delancy's ribs till he bellowed with pain.

Then they saw and heard Jack Lightfoot, and scudded round the corner.

With quick bounds Jack reached Delancy's side, and found him lying there on the ground groaning.

His little cane was broken, his hat was battered, his clothing was covered with street mud, while blood streamed down his face. The thugs had made a good attempt at "pounding him to a jelly." This was Jack Lightfoot, they thought, and they had tried to obey instructions and earn their money—some of it Delancy's money.

"Oh—oh!" Delancy moaned. "I—I think I'm—I'm badly hurt. Lightfoot, is this you? I—aw—cawn't see anything hardly, don't y' know. Help me into that drug store, please, and get a doctor. I've got some broken ribs, y' know, I feel sure."

Jack lifted him up, caught up his hat, and helped him into the drug store.

Some men, one of them a police officer, appeared as he did so, rushing to assist him.

"How'd this happen?" demanded the policeman.

"He was crossing the street, when they jumped on him," Jack replied.

"I think I know those fellows, and if it's them I'll have them landed for it!" the officer threatened, taking the groaning Delancy by one arm while Jack assisted on the other side.

"It was—was all a mistake," said Delancy. "I mean it was—aw—Oh, the dickens, what do I mean, any—how? Am I hurt badly, d'ye think? Aw—handle me easy there!"

Delancy was conducted to a room back of the drug store, and was there put to rights even before a doctor arrived. His face was bruised and scratched, and he had numerous contusions on his body that were extremely painful, but no bones were broken. Jack had started to his aid too soon to permit the young toughs to finish their job. But they had begun well, and had made thorough work for the time they were at it. Delancy was a wreck. His handsome clothing was so mud-stained and torn and his face so battered that it grieved him to look at himself in the mirror.

"Call a carriage," he wailed to Jack, fairly sobbing, "and take me to the hotel. Oh, I'm a sight! This is perfectly awful, don't y' know! My face will show scratches for a week, don't y' know."

"More likely for a month, I should say."

"What made them jump on you?" asked the policeman.

"Aw—it was a—I mean I don't know, y' know! I cawn't imagine, y' know."

Jack called the carriage, and then rode with Delancy to the hotel.

As he helped Delancy from the carriage and up to his room, it came to Delancy like a flash that Jack had recovered in a marvelous manner from the result of that twisted ankle.

"It's queer, don't y' know, that your—aw—ankle doesn't hurt you any more!" he observed. "I suppose it's—aw—the excitement. It will cure some things—excitement will. You were surprised—aw—when those ruffians jumped out and attacked me?"

"I was surprised at the way they handled you."

He helped Delancy into his room, then closed the door, and rang for further assistance.

"And I was surprised, too, by the way they——" He stopped and stared at Jack. "What was that you said, Lightfoot?"

"I said I was surprised by the way they handled you. I thought they meant to make a mild attack—a sort of bluff, you see!"

Delancy's face, flushed by the indignity which had been heaped on him, and by the pain, paled again, becoming white. He looked hard at Jack.

"I—aw—don't think I understand you, y' know!"

"I see you don't. But I understood you."

"Understood me?"

"I'm not quite the fool that I seem to you, Delancy. Put that down in your notebook, so that you won't forget it."

Delancy dropped, staring, into the easy-chair that had been drawn out for him.

"In the first place, I knew of that trick you and Ben Nelson meant to work."

Delancy's face caught some color again.

"Of—of course you did, for you—you received the money, y' know."

"Not any, Delancy. There's where you're mistaken. Ben Nelson made a fool of himself and went to Phil Kirtland with that bribe, and Phil made him think that he was me. See? Can you get that through your head?"

Delancy's face went white again and a look of fright and bewilderment came into his pale blue eyes.

"What?" he howled, forgetting his pain.

"Straight goods, Delancy! We dropped to the whole game, and when I slipped and pretended to wrench my ankle it was for the purpose of sending you across the street to that drug store, and not because I had hurt my ankle. You went; the thugs made the

mistake of thinking you were the fellow they were to hammer; and they proceeded to hammer you. See?"

Delancy seemed about to swoon in the chair.

Then, while his eyes still held that staring look of dismay, his wits began to come back to him.

"It's a mistake, y' know!" he declared.

Jack smiled.

"Yes, I know it was, as it turned out—a costly mistake for you."

"But no—no—I don't mean that. You're mistaken, y' know. I—I——"

"Didn't you say something about that bribe I was supposed to have accepted, as we walked together down to that street corner?"

Delancy groaned, but managed to pretend that it was from the pain of his injuries.

"You—you don't understand what I was trying to—to—aw—say."

"Delancy," said Jack, sharply, "I overheard you and Ben Nelson talking right in this room this afternoon, when you were making your plans—or rather when he was telling you his—for that Innes Street conspiracy. I was in Mrs. Livingston's room, next door, and heard all of it."

Delancy sank limply back in his chair, gasping, his eyes big and scared.

"But—but——"

"No use to pile up any more lies, Delancy. There comes the man I rang for. Give him your orders. As for me—ta, ta!"

He backed through the door, waving his hand mockingly.

Delancy sat staring at the door where he had vanished.

"Great gods and little fishes!" he gasped. "That was—aw—the worst mistake ever, y' know—the very worst ever!"

CHAPTER VI.

SETTLING IT.

Ben Nelson was in a wild rage against both Jack Lightfoot and Phil Kirtland, but principally in connection with Phil.

He had heard of the miscarriage of his plan—he had not been far away at the time it happened—and when he hurried to Delancy's room, shortly after Jack left it, Delancy had told him the whole story, with much groaning, and had foolishly loaded him with reproaches.

Then there had been an exchange of sharp words,

in which each called the other a fool and other equally unpleasant things, and Nelson had come away, as hot as mustard, leaving Delancy to his arnica, his groans and his court plaster.

"If I meet Phil Kirtland I'll pound his head off for that!" was Nelson's declaration.

He met Phil very soon, for Phil and Jack had come together again, with some of the other fellows from Cranford, and all had heard Jack's story. It was so astonishing that the air had been filled with "Howling mackerels!" "Jiminy crickets!" "Hemlocks!" and "Grannies!" and other queer expletives, as Ned, and Lafe, and Jubal freed their minds on the subject.

And now Jack and Phil were alone, talking the thing over themselves, as they walked beneath the leafless trees that in summer made the hotel piazza a cool and inviting place.

Jack and Phil had turned at the end of their walk, and found themselves face to face with Ben Nelson and Kid Casey, Nelson's friend and intimate.

Casey had heard the whole story from Nelson, and had been unkind enough to say, "I told you so!" a thing which never improves the temper of the fellow to whom it is addressed.

Nelson stopped.

The light of the street lamp sifted down through the leafless tree branches, so he had a chance to get a good look and note the very material difference in the personal appearance of these two fellows from Cranford.

"I suppose this is Jack Lightfoot?" he said, with a sneer, looking hard at Jack.

The sarcastic laugh which came from Jack stung like a whip.

"Now that you see me, I hope you'll know me next time! Phil and I are twin brothers, you know, and look so much alike that all of our friends have trouble in telling us apart."

For an instant Ben Nelson seemed on the point of flying at Jack's throat, but something in Jack's manner warned him to go slow.

He turned to Phil.

"So you're Kirtland?"

"Among my friends, yes; among those who try to do me I'm anyone they want to think I am. See?"

"You're a smart pair!"

"Too smart for you!" said Phil.

"But I'll settle with you, remember!"

"Settle it now," Phil invited, flaring up. "You'll find me ready."

"Bah!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"You're a contemptible scoundrel!"

Phil sprang at him, swinging for his face, and landed a jarring blow.

Kid Casey caught Phil by the arm, as Nelson staggered backward.

"Drop it!" said Jack, advancing on Casey. "Drop it, or you'll mix with me!"

That stinging blow not only increased Ben Nelson's rage, but aroused all the latent devil in him.

"I'll kill you for that!" he cried, putting his hand to his face, where Phil's blow had fallen.

Jack pushed Kid Casey aside and laid his hand on Phil's shoulder.

"Let me go!" Phil panted.

"I'll fight you now, or anywhere!" said Nelson. "You're a dirty, treacherous skunk, and I've sworn to pound your head in, and stand ready to do it."

Jack took his hand from Phil's shoulder.

"Not here," warned Casey; "we'll all be pulled, if there's a fight here."

"Let me get at him, here or anywhere!" Phil fumed.

"All right," said Jack, standing aside. "I'm willing!"

"Is this your put in?" Casey snapped, addressing him.

"I think it is. I'm making it so, anyway. Ben Nelson has shown the dirty streak in his character; and neither you nor anyone else can expect Phil to take his insults."

"Meet me anywhere!" said Phil to Nelson, his voice quivering.

"All right, I'll meet you, and I'll satisfy you. We'll go into the lot right behind this building. Come on, you skunk, if you ain't afraid to meet me."

Phil seemed about to jump at him again, but Jack caught him and held him back.

"Let go of me!" Phil fumed.

"I'm backing you," Jack answered. "Meet him where he says, and give him all he wants."

"Oh, I'll meet him!" Phil raged.

"Come back into this lot and I'll pound your cowardly head off," said Nelson, in a low voice. "I just want a chance to get at you."

In addition to his anger, there was the desire to put Phil out of the football game the next day. He fancied he was more than Phil's match in a fight.

Phil flung himself toward the lot.

"You can have all you want, all right; come along!"

Jack took him by the arm.

"Lightfoot——" Phil began, angrily, shaking off Jack's arm.

"Just remember that I'm in with you in this," Jack urged; "but you must cool down or he may do you."

"Bah! I'll pound his face in."

"Yes, I expect you to; but you'll be more certain to if you'll try to cool down a bit. Let him do the raging and air pounding; and you keep cool and make every blow count. You can knock him out, and I know it."

It was good advice, but Phil was hardly in a mood just then to accept it from Jack, or anyone else. Besides, it seemed to imply that Jack thought he knew more about such things than Phil did, and that was not pleasing to the other.

However, he quieted perceptibly, as the four young fellows stepped into the dark lot, where the light from the street lamps came but feebly.

Here there was a high wall, shutting off all view of the street, rendering it a safe place for an event of this kind.

"Let him rage and wear himself out, if he wants to; and make every blow you land count," Jack advised. "Here, I'll take your coat; and if Kid Casey chips in I'll jump him."

Phil slipped out of his coat, took off his cuffs, and removed his hat, and Jack took charge of them.

"Kirtland," said Nelson, still fuming, "I suppose you thought that was a smart trick you played at Cranford; but now I settle with you for it, and for that lick you just gave me. When I'm through with you, don't play the baby act and call for the police. Be a man about it; and understand that I'm going to give you the best licking you ever got."

He disdained to discard his coat, for he thought it quite unnecessary. He was larger than Phil, and considered himself a fighter.

Jack watched him narrowly; and, even though the place was rather dark to see well, he observed that, in moving round, Nelson did not seem as light and active as Phil. He was heavier, and would probably deliver a heavier blow.

"Don't let him land, if you can help it!" Jack whispered.

Nelson did not wait for any word, or preliminaries of any sort, but lunged at Phil, leaping in to land a

blow that he thought would settle the whole business right off.

His heavy fist pounded only the air; for Phil sidestepped and the blow went over his ducked head.

But——

Thump!

As he thus side-stepped and ducked, Phil shot in a stomach punch just above Nelson's belt that sounded, when it fell, like the thump of a drumstick.

Nelson dropped back, beyond reach of another blow; and Phil retreated, standing on the defensive.

Nelson had suddenly learned a bit of caution. Apparently, Phil was not to be the easy mark he had anticipated. And, besides, that terrific jolt in the stomach had given him a squeamish feeling.

"Do him up!" Casey whispered. "Rush him, and do him up!"

But for almost a minute Nelson did not seem to be in a "rushing" mood. He advanced and feinted, danced around, and then fell back without trying to land a blow.

Phil stood on the defensive, waiting for Nelson to jump in.

"Smash him!" whispered Casey.

Nelson was losing "wind" by his present tactics.

Then a new rush of rage, caused by the recollection that he had said he would smash this youngster, came to bear him on again, and he sprang at Phil, with a quick leap, driving for Phil's face. The blow landed, for Phil's guard was beaten down.

Phil reached for Nelson's body as he dropped back, and failed to get it.

Thus encouraged, Nelson came again, swinging for another head blow.

As at first, Phil sidestepped and ducked with lightning quickness; and again that thump sounded as his heavy punch caught his antagonist in the stomach.

It was not the staggerer that the first was, and only served to rouse Nelson to a greater fighting pitch; and he now rushed Phil, beating down his guard, and by sheer strength and driving force landed a heavy jolt on Phil's tanned neck.

For a second or two it was a mix-up, with each striking wildly.

"Steady!" Jack warned.

He was sure Phil could whip Ben Nelson, if he kept his head and avoided the waste of useless blows and wind-killing rushes.

Nelson tried to get Phil's head "in chancery," when he would have had him; but again, by a ducking motion, Phil escaped.

This time he got clear of Nelson's clutches; but Nelson pursued him, running after him and swinging, while Phil ducked and dodged.

"Stand up to me, you coward!" said Nelson. "Stand up and take your medicine."

Fortunately for Phil, Nelson tripped, as he thus pursued; and Phil was given a chance to recover.

"Steady!" Jack warned in a low tone, feeling called on to give that necessary warning, even though he knew how touchy Phil was about receiving advice from anyone.

It was experience, however, more than Jack's words, which now forced Phil to maneuver more carefully, when Nelson, thinking to "finish," tried to rush him again.

Side-stepping to evade the rush, Phil this time succeeded in landing a blow on Nelson's jaw that was so heavy and well directed that the big fellow spun round, clutching at the air, and almost falling from his feet.

Phil swung again; and would have knocked Nelson down this time if Kid Casey had not darted in.

The coat and other articles dropped from Jack's hands to the ground; his hard fist shot out; and Kid Casey tumbled back against the wall of the house, blood gushing from his mouth.

"Hands off!" Jack shouted, angrily. "You'll settle with me, if you don't keep your hands off!"

Kid Casey put his hand to his face, bewildered; then his rage broke forth against Jack in angry cursing.

"That's all right," said Jack, hotly; "but understand that I'll come for you again, if you try to interfere. This fight was forced on Kirtland and is between him and Nelson. After it's over, if you want to try me you can do it. Hands off now, though."

But Phil had lost his opportunity.

Nelson had retreated almost at a run; but was now

returning, while Phil was backing from him, expecting him to rush.

Nelson darted in as before, swinging for a heavy blow.

It grazed Phil's head, as Phil knocked it up with a quick movement; and then Phil's hard right fist again found Nelson's face.

Nelson reeled back, but came again instantly, trying to rush in by beating down Phil's guard, and so get his head "in chancery."

Phil was quick on his feet, and he escaped; landing another blow, this time on Nelson's neck.

Nelson began to chase him round; with Phil ducking, and landing whenever he could.

Then Phil found his opportunity again, for Nelson slipped on the frosty grass. That pitched him slightly forward, losing him his equilibrium to a certain extent, and throwing his face toward Phil's fist. The fist shot out, with an upward movement. Once more it caught the point of the jaw, and Nelson rose into the air, almost stiffening.

Kid Casey did not rush in that time; and Phil's other fist struck quickly, as Nelson thus rose into the air, this blow reaching the jaw also; and Nelson tumbled back upon the ground, falling heavily.

Phil jumped at him, even as he fell; but Jack caught him by the shoulder.

"Let me go!" Phil howled, in a mad rage.

"Wait till he gets up—if he gets up!"

Nelson did not rise for a full half minute, and when he got up, with Casey's assistance, he was a thoroughly cowed young ruffian. He reeled on his feet, essaying to move toward Phil, for he was loath to admit that he was whipped. Then his stomach seemed to rise up and turn over, as in a case of seasickness, his brain spun round, and he would have fallen, if Casey had not caught him.

He staggered against the wall, with Casey supporting him.

"That's all—all—right; but I'll—I'll settle with you!" he gurgled at Phil, who had come close up to him in a threatening manner.

Phil laughed harshly and unpleasantly.

"I don't think you will—to-night!"

"Lightfoot, I'll settle with you!" cried Kid Casey.

"That's all right, too," said Jack; "any time you're ready."

Casey did not try it just then. He had been given a very unpleasant taste of Jack Lightfoot's quality.

Jack picked up Phil's coat, hat and cuffs, and gave them to him.

"The show's over," he said; "we'll go!"

"But—but—it's not over!" stammered Ben Nelson, unwilling to admit his defeat.

"It's over for to-night, anyway, unless Casey thinks he'd like to have an extra performance."

He looked at Casey.

"We'll meet you another time," said Casey, fuming and angry.

Phil was putting on his cuffs, trembling so much as he did so that he could hardly get them on.

Then he donned his coat and hat.

As he did so, the old pride swelled in his bosom.

"Nelson," he cried, airily, "I suppose you know by this time which one of us is Jack Lightfoot and which is Phil Kirtland? If you don't, come again some time and get another lesson."

"Bah!" said Nelson, too weak to vent his rage and humiliation in any other way. "I'll come again—don't you forget it!"

"And I'll settle with you, Lightfoot!" Casey threatened.

However, he seemed in no hurry to make the settlement just then.

Jack and Phil left, as soon as the latter was ready to go.

"They'll not trouble us again," was Jack's prophecy.

"I rather think Nelson has found that I'm not an easy man to handle!" Phil boasted.

"Yes, he's found that out, all right; they'll not trouble us again in a hurry."

CHAPTTR VII.

FOOTBALL.

The gridiron at Tidewater showed its white lines near the spot occupied by the old diamond of the baseball season.

It was a beautiful field, opening down to the water of the bay, and from it a good view of the bay and much of the shipping could be had.

The day before Thanksgiving had dawned clear and frosty, and even when afternoon drew on the day was cold, yet with no wind.

The spectators were coming in goodly numbers, but they were coming muffled in furs and overcoats.

Yet there was one thing which the frigidity of the day had not cooled in the least, and that was the hot rage of Ben Nelson and Kid Casey.

They had communicated their anger to the members of the Tidewater eleven, also, by the utterance of a number of falsehoods.

Nelson had told them that an unprovoked attack on him had driven him into that fight with Phil Kirtland, and Casey supported him in the statement; and the Tidewater fellows were under the impression that it had been an attempt on the part of Jack and Phil to dispose of some of the good football material of Tidewater by so hammering them up that they would not be able to play a good game.

When the story of Nelson's mistaken attempt to bribe Jack spread about, Nelson lied about that, also, most strenuously.

Delancy Shelton aided him in this by denying that Nelson had spoken to him on the subject. Delancy tried to make it appear that he had received his injuries from some toughs who had set on him to rob him.

"Oh, let 'em lie!" said Phil, scornfully.

"That's right," Jack assented; "they're going to do the lying, whether we want them to or not. We'll try to give them something else to think about, as soon as the game is on."

But Jack was worried about one thing. Wilson Crane, the quarter-back, was out of it, through his own folly.

During the night Wilson had fallen in once more with Nick Flint's "gang" of Cranford young toughs, and had been led into a fight in which he had so lamed his wrist and shoulder that he was quite disqualified for football work.

Out on the grounds, as the crowd gathered, Jack was

putting the eleven through their warming-up paces, and had himself taken the position of quarter-back, placing Reel Snodgrass in as left half-back and Orson Oxx in as one of the guards.

Orson was excessively fat, but he was also excessively strong; and while he could not run to beat a turtle, his mere weight and strength were worth something in the rush line.

It was the best Jack could do, from the material that had come over to Tidewater. And even though he knew it would please Delancy to have Reel in as half-back, he did not let that influence him in the least. Reel was as good a man as he had now for the place; and Jack was out to win the game from Tidewater.

"We'll have to depend on you a good deal, Reel!" he said, as he made these changes. "But I know you'll do your best."

And Reel had flushed with pleasure, declaring that he would play as he had never played before. It was, he knew, his opportunity. He had not known of Delancy's attempt to have Jack bribed, and was not willing even now to believe it, since Delancy himself denied it.

"You'll find me right there, ready for anything, Lightfoot," he promised, and in the practice work he showed that he meant what he said.

It was but another proof of what Delancy had declared to Ben Nelson, that whenever Jack Lightfoot got an eleven, or a nine, under him, and prepared to lead them to battle, he seemed to have the power to mold them together as one, no matter what had happened in the past.

It was the thing which made Jack so great a leader.

And now, since Jack had backed him so heartily the previous evening in that fight with Ben Nelson, even Phil Kirtland, who was always inclined to be jealous of Jack, could not say enough good things of him, nor show a heartier desire to carry out Jack's orders to the letter.

Jack and his eleven "herded" by themselves, as the Tidewater eleven came trotting out upon the grid-iron.

The Tidewater fans cheered when they appeared.

But, grouped together, standing up, near one end

of the new grand stand, was the Cranford crowd, with the Cranford girls in its midst; and these fluttered out their little flags, as in the old baseball days, and loudly cheered the eleven from Cranford.

Then the referee came upon the field, and the game opened up, without much ceremony or preliminaries.

And everyone knew it was to be a game for "blood," for Tidewater was in an ugly temper, due to the lies of Nelson and Casey.

Casey was the captain.

Here was the lineup:

CRANFORD.	TIDEWATER.
Jubal Marlin, l. e.	Ben Bartlett, l. e.
Bob Brewster, l. t.	Ben Talbot, l. t.
Brodie Strawn, l. g.	Ben Nelson, l. g.
Connie Lynch, center.	Joe Bowers, center.
Orson Oxx, r. g.	George Steele, r. g.
Lafe Lampton, r. t.	Sidney Talbot, r. t.
Saul Messenger, r. e.	Mason King, r. e.
Jack Lightfoot, q'back.	Silas Cross, q'back.
Reel Snodgrass, l. h.	Kid Casey, l. h.
Phil Kirtland, r. h.	Jim Lane, r. h.
Tom Lightfoot, f'back.	Paul Lockwood, f'back.

The toss fell to Cranford, and as there was no wind they chose the kick-off, and Phil Kirtland advanced for this.

There was a proud light in Phil's eyes and pride as well in his bearing. The flush on his dark face increased his good looks, too. The flush grew deeper when he heard the hand-clapping from the Cranford enthusiasts, and the Cranford cheer.

Tidewater was standing back ten yards from the center line which held the ball, and some of the players were far back toward their goal, ready to get the ball when Phil should send it flying.

There was a moment of breathless suspense.

Punk!

The ball was in the air; it was a good kick, for the pigskin went flying.

The game was on, and the yells of the rooters arose in a roar.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S FLYING WEDGE.

Jim Lane punted the pigskin back into Cranford territory.

Lafe Lampton stopped it on Cranford's forty-five-yard line; and here it was down for the first scrimmage.

The spectators apparently had forgotten the nipping air. They were yelling; and the little Cranford flags were waving.

The ball came back from Connie Lynch to Jack Lightfoot, and Jack swung it to Reel Snodgrass, while making a fake pass toward Phil Kirtland.

All these plays had been drilled upon until every man knew just what he was to do, and did it instantly.

Phil made a dive toward Tidewater's left end, with the ball apparently hugged to his breast; while Reel Snodgrass pitched at the hole which Bob Brewster, Connie Lynch, Orson Oxx and Lafe Lampton were trying to smash through the Tidewater center.

The ends and the left tackle of Tidewater were fooled by Phil, who was running with Tom Lightfoot at his side; and they swung in toward that end, to cut him off.

Jack Lightfoot and Saul Messenger had jumped for the center line with Reel Snodgrass, screening him as well as they could, to keep the Tidewater fellows from knowing he had the ball.

For a moment the lines heaved and swayed; then a hole was torn through, as Reel and those with him struck the trembling mass; and through that hole Reel was lifted and pushed with the ball.

It is always to be remembered that the side having the ball may not use hands or arms against their opponents, with the exception of the player running with the ball, who may use his hands and arms. The players of the side not having the ball may use their hands and arms, but only to get their opponents out of the way in order to reach the ball or stop the player carrying it.

"Hold 'em!" Kid Casey was roaring; and he did his part, for he got Reel about the legs and clung to him, being dragged forward with Reel, who was being pushed through by the combined weight of those big fellows, Orson and Lafe, Bob and Brodie, aided by Jack Lightfoot.

One of the players who had started after Kirtland tackled and downed him, still thinking he had the ball.

"Through with it!" yelled Jack.

And Reel and the ball went through.

But Kid Casey still had Reel by the legs; and the whole mass went down, falling on Casey.

The referee, who had been dancing about and stooping and looking, to see when the ball was down, blew his whistle sharply, and the tangle of bodies unwound.

It had been hot work, but the ball had gone forward five yards, and was now on the fifty-yard line.

There was another lineup for scrimmage.

Again the ball came back from Connie to Jack, and from Jack to Phil, while the Cranford line tried to hold the opposition in check.

The signals which Jack had called were an order for Phil to drop back for a kick; which Phil executed with commendable promptness, kicking the ball into Tidewater territory while the line was being held and the Tidewater fellows were trying to break through to get at him.

The Tidewater full-back got the ball and tried to punt it, but the Cranford ends were right on him, and the result was a fumble.

The ball shot to one side, and Jubal Marlin fell on it.

It was Cranford's ball, on Tidewater's thirty-yard line.

Another wild yell rose from the throats of the Cranford enthusiasts.

With the ball down, the scrimmage came here.

The play of Cranford that followed was a whirlwind, and was put into operation without a single signal.

Jack, as quarter-back, sent the ball to Tom Lightfoot, who was in position and ready to receive it.

Jack became himself, then, the peak of a flying wedge, with Reel Snodgrass and Phil Kirtland on either side of him, all three hurling themselves at the line of their opponents.

Jubal Marlin and Saul Messenger, the ends, swung in beside and a little behind Tom, who carried the ball, and who followed the three men ahead.

The heavy center, guards and tackles had smashed into the Tidewater line, boring outward from center to open a hole; and into this reeling spot where they smashed Jack came with his flying wedge, Tom with the ball being well protected in the midst of the wedge.

That flying wedge was like the prow of a ship, and it hurled the opposing players right and left, as the prow of a ship does the water.

There was no such thing as stopping that irresistible flying wedge, and consequently Jack was borne through the ranks of the enemy with a rush.

Tom, right behind him, went through with the ball; and, with Jack and Phil and others forming a splendid interference, he started down the field, having but about thirty yards to run to cross the Tidewater goal line for a touch-down.

The ground was strewn with fallen players, Tidewater and Cranford boys; but Tom tore on, with his interference, some of the opposition setting out in hot pursuit of him.

The spectators had again gone frantic, and the Cranford enthusiasts were yelling to split their lungs and bellowing wildly: "Hurrah for Cranford!"

Then Tom crossed the line, carrying the ball over for the touch-down.

Tidewater dropped back behind her line, and the ball was taken out and kicked over the bar for goal—making it six.

Then the rooters yelled again, and the Cranford flags fluttered victoriously.

Tidewater had now the option of a kick-off from the center of the field or of ordering Cranford to kick off.

They chose the kick-off themselves.

Then once more the ball was in motion, with the lines charging each other and the spectators yelling their enthusiasm.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW JACK WAS KNOCKED OUT.

Kid Casey "had it in" for Jack Lightfoot, because of the stinging blow on the mouth which Jack had dealt him the previous evening.

He and Ben Nelson had talked the thing over, and had agreed to "do up" Jack Lightfoot in the game, if the chance fell their way.

There was a sudden, wild burst of sound from the Tidewater enthusiasts.

A Tidewater player had secured the ball from a punt by the opposition, and with another punt had driven it far into Cranford territory.

The ball fell into the arms of Reel Snodgrass, who, without using his privilege of a "fair catch," started to run with it.

Seeing him running with the ball, Jack and Tom Lightfoot swung in with him, as interference, and, with others coming to their aid in the same way, they enabled Reel to take the ball on for fifteen yards before it was down.

The ball was now just over the center line, in Tidewater territory.

Here came a quick scrimmage.

Receiving the ball from Connie Lynch, the center, Jack passed it quick to Phil Kirtland, for a plunge against Tidewater's left tackle.

It was another flying wedge play, with a little different formation, Jack and Reel being with Phil as he struck the line, and Tom with the ends coming in right behind, to give momentum and hurl the ball on with the man who held it.

Phil went through for five yards.

Tidewater expected another flying wedge smash, and braced for the struggle.

Jack sent the ball to Tom; but while Cranford tried to hold the Tidewater line, Tom kicked the ball over.

It was not a great success, for one Tidewater player broke through and almost tackled him before the ball left the toe of his shoe.

A wild mix-up followed, with everybody apparently diving for the ball.

Jubal secured it, and, seeing he could not run with it, fell on it.

Again the ball was down for a scrimmage.

Tom was sent back once more for kick; but Jim Lane broke through, and the ball was knocked sideways and a Tidewater player fell on it.

With the ball in their possession, Tidewater tried to drive it through Cranford's right end.

Saul Messenger was there, with his heavy, pugilistic shoulders.

"Hold 'em!" he howled, bracing himself and clutching at the man with the ball.

"Through with it!" yelled Kid Casey.

But the line held, and the man with the ball went down, on top of Saul, with other players falling on him before the referee could blow his whistle.

Tidewater tried now to go over that bag of fat—Orson Oxx.

Orson went down on his back before the terrible, smashing blow which Tidewater delivered, and had the unpleasant sensation of heavy feet treading on his round, fat stomach. But he was gritty, and, having caught one fellow by the ankles, he was holding on.

"Hold 'em!" Jack was commanding, having thrown his weight into the weakening line where Orson had been bowled over.

Again Tidewater was held.

In the two attempts they had not advanced the ball two yards.

Jack knew that now, fearing to lose the ball on downs, they would try for a kick, and he was ready for them.

Tidewater tried to hold the Cranford line while its man dropped back for the kick; but Jack and Lafe Lampton broke through, diving at the man with the ball.

He bungled his kick because of this, for Cranford's rush was like a tornado; and the ball, flying to one side, was caught up by Jack, who started with great leaps toward the Tidewater goal.

The lines broke apart, and the Tidewater players sought to cut Jack off or overtake him.

The two men nearest him now were Jim Lane and Kid Casey.

Jack was thrown toward Lane by trying to dodge Casey, and Lane sprang and made a tackle.

They went down together, Jack hugging the ball.

Right behind was Kid Casey; and, though the whistle of the referee was shrilling announcing that the ball was down, Casey made his leap as if for a tackle, and struck Jack in the back with his knees, as Jack lay sprawled on the ground with the ball under him.

The jump was a tiger spring which brought Casey down on the small of Jack's back with all his weight, fairly driving him into the ground. It was a villainous deed for revenge.

A low cry of pain came from the plucky leader of the Cranford team.

The referee came at Casey furiously.

"I've a mind to penalize you for that! Was that an accident?"

Casey rose, his face red.

Jack lay on the ground, groaning. His face had suddenly turned white.

Lafe sprang to him, to help him up; and when Jack arose, with the players crowding round him, he reeled as if about to fall in a faint.

"Here!" said Lafe, anxiously. "Sit down on the ground!"

Jack dropped down, breathlessly, his face growing still whiter.

"A doctor here!" cried Tom, who had also dropped down at Jack's side.

The referee had taken possession of the ball.

"That was an accident!" said Casey, appealing to the gathering crowd. "Of course I wouldn't do a thing like that intentionally, and anyone who knows me knows I wouldn't."

"But you had no right to jump at him after the whistle sounded and the ball was down!" said the umpire, cuttingly.

"I was making my leap for tackle when he went down," Casey explained, "and I wouldn't have struck him that way if he hadn't fallen; that drove my knees into his back."

Lafe looked at Casey with flaming face.

"I saw that," he said, crisply, "and I believe you did it on purpose!"

Saul Messenger began to edge toward Casey, as if he wanted to hit him in the face.

"Howling mackerels!" sputtered Ned Skeen, one of the substitutes. "Jack seriously hurt? Then we're beat!"

Jack seemed about to fall over on the grass, he was so weak and faint; but when he heard that from Ned he straightened up, trying to smile.

"Fellows," he said, "I'll be all right in a minute. Referee, can't you give us just a little time?"

He tried to stand up, but trembled so that Lafe sharply commanded him to sit down.

The whole eleven was crowding round and trying to do something for him, and the substitutes and spectators were coming up and pushing in.

"Stand back and give him air!" Lafe bawled. "Jiminy crickets, haven't you fellows any sense? He can't breathe, with all of you crowding into him."

"A doctor here!" Tom was shouting.

The spectators further away were squirming and writhing in excitement.

Some of them came out into the gridiron, hurrying toward the spot where the "accident" had occurred, among them Daisy, Kate and Nellie and Lily Livingston.

They had seen Jack go down, and they feared now that he was badly hurt.

As they came up they filled the air with excited questions.

That Jack should be hurt was the last anyone expected, for he was in thorough condition and as hard as nails.

A doctor came out of the crowd, and, reaching Jack, stooped down, asking some questions. He poked at Jack's back, making Jack wince.

"No more play for you to-day!" he said, positively.

A groan came from the Cranford boys.

Lafe and Tom helped Jack to his feet.

"All right," said Jack, though it was hard to say; "put Phil in as captain and quarter-back and go ahead with the game."

His eleven swarmed round him, as he walked weakly from the gridiron, with Tom and Lafe half supporting him.

"Fellows," he said, in a low tone, "I can't prove it, of course, but that was, in my opinion, a dirty trick on the part of Kid Casey to lay me out for what happened last night. He wanted revenge, and he hoped also to enable his team to win by it. Don't let 'em. You can beat 'em, and I know it; Phil's all right, and you can win out without me."

Phil heard the words, and his face glowed.

It was not with pride now—though he was glad of the opportunity of capturing the eleven—but with anger and resentment against Kid Casey. He thought he understood the whole thing; and that the trick which

had knocked Jack out temporarily was simply because Jack had backed him in that fight, and had struck Casey when he jumped in to interfere in the fight.

"Jack," he said, and his voice trembled with feeling, "we'll give 'em all they want. That was certainly a dirty coward's trick, and I'd like to knock Casey hard for it."

CHAPTER X.

KIRTLAND AS CAPTAIN AND QUARTER-BACK.

When Phil Kirtland went in as quarter-back, Ned Skeen took Kirtland's position of right half-back.

Then the game started again, but the whistle of the referee, announcing that the time had expired, seemed to sound almost instantly.

In the wait that followed, the Cranford players and their friends crowded again round Jack Lightfoot.

Jack was much better, and but for the injunctions of the doctor, he might have declared he could again go into the game at the close of the ten minutes' intermission.

"You're likely to so hurt yourself, if you do, that you'll play no more this fall," was the doctor's statement; and that was enough for Jack, and enough to make every member of the team declare that he must stay out at all hazards.

Kirtland was pleased when he knew Jack was not to go in again in this game. It was a selfish feeling, of course; but we are all more or less selfish.

Tidewater had the kick-off, with the goals changed, when the second half opened.

Tom Lightfoot caught the ball and punted it back.

Jim Lane caught it, making a fair catch, and put his heel down.

From the free-kick that followed, the ball came flying back into Cranford territory, and again Tom Lightfoot drove it with a punt.

The Tidewater player who secured it tried now to run with it, and was tackled and downed by Saul Messenger.

The ball was Tidewater's, and down near the center of the field; and here came the scrimmage.

Now that the opposing team had the ball, Phil

Kirtland, as quarter-back, dropped back full twenty yards or more behind his line, to be ready for the man with the ball in case he broke through. This was one of Jack's instructions for the quarter-back, and, except under some peculiar circumstance, was always the thing done by Wilson Crane when he played that position.

It served well now, for Paul Lockwood, with the ball, circled the end, bowling over Jubal Marlin, who opposed him there, and came down the field with great leaps, with some Cranford players swinging in to catch and down him.

By this swinging in of the Cranford runners, Lockwood was forced to run toward the center lines, and so was driven almost straight at Phil.

Jack, from a position just outside the gridiron, watched this play with interest, and was pleased to see that Phil kept steady on his feet, waiting for Lockwood to come to him, instead of advancing to meet Lockwood.

Tom Lightfoot was coming up to narrow the place through which Lockwood would have to pass.

Phil got into motion when Lockwood tried to go by him. There was a twinkling of legs, as Phil made his leap for tackle, and Paul Lockwood, though he tried to dodge and go by, went down with the ball.

It was well done.

Jack clapped his hands and joined in the Cranford cheer as Phil made that successful tackle.

But the ball had been brought well down toward Cranford's goal line.

And when Tidewater tried something of the same kind again, shooting the man with the ball round the end, while holding the Crawford line, the runner with the ball got past Tom and Phil, with the aid of his interference, and, bowling over Ned Skeen, the new half-back, he carried the ball over.

It was kicked for goal; and the score was tied.

Phil Kirtland felt his heart jump.

Was he to lose the game for Cranford in the second half?

He had always claimed that he was as good a player and captain as Jack Lightfoot, and his friends had maintained the same thing.

"Ned ought to have stopped him," was his thought; "the fault of that was Ned Skeen's."

When the ball was going again, and Cranford was pushing it down toward Tidewater's line, Ned Skeen made an off-side play that penalized the team for ten yards of distance.

Phil was furious.

"Say, can't you do better than that?" he asked, his face red as fire and his manner caustic.

Ned was doing his best.

Phil now asked the time of the linesman, for he knew that the second half was going rapidly.

"Ten minutes yet," was the answer.

Ten minutes in which to make a play that should defeat Tidewater!

"Fellows, we can do it!"

Phil felt that he must do it.

There were certain well-drilled plays which Cranford still had in reserve, and which Phil knew were good.

Cranford had the ball when Phil tried the first of these.

As quarter-back, he called the signals, snapping them out sharply.

Then, instead of passing the ball, he made a fake pass, at the same time tucking the ball under his arm. Running along the line the required five yards, he went still further, swinging to go round the end. Cranford, at the same time, was trying to hold Tidewater's desperate rush line.

Saul Messenger, right-end, swung in as Phil's interference, thus placing his heavy, hunchy shoulders and pugilistic neck between Tidewater and Phil, and running at Phil's side.

Tom Lightfoot, who had previously advanced, also swung in as interference.

But it was no go.

Cranford had tried that play in a previous game, and Tidewater was "onto" it.

Their left-tackle and end came at Phil; the right end swung round, while before him Phil had the quarter-back, the full-back and left half-back.

The Tidewater rush line had broken. Some of those

composing it were dashing at Phil, who, trying to go round them by clever dodges, was being driven toward the right side lines.

He kept the ball, but was driven across the lines and out of bounds.

He had gained ten yards, having run fifteen beyond the line of the down, but the last five, being over the line, were not counted.

The ball was brought back to the point where it was forced out—Tidewater's forty-yard line.

It was taken in here fifteen yards along the line, where the scrimmage came, with Cranford still in possession of the ball, for it had not gone out of Phil's hands.

"Five minutes more to play!" notified the linesman, in accordance with the new rules, which provide for such a notification.

Phil's heart gave another jump.

The score was a tie. Cranford had the ball, but could they put it across the goal line of their opponents in that five minutes?

CHAPTER XI.

HOW KIRTLAND WON THE GAME FOR CRANFORD.

A great and mighty resolve came into the heart of Phil Kirtland now.

It had been impossible for him to forget himself in this new position of captain of the eleven, and his thoughts had been of how he could himself make brilliant plays which should draw the hand-clapping and admiration of the spectators. It was the old, weak spot in Phil's character.

There were other plays he might have tried which possibly would have covered him with glory, if there had been time.

But the thing to do right now was something which would have the very best chance of taking the ball over the line within that five minutes.

Phil knew, to his own satisfaction, what that play was. The only trouble was that it gave him very little chance to shine.

But for once, for the honor of a team victory and the glory of Cranford, Phil put self aside.

The lines were forming.

"The ball must go over!" was Phil's thought.

He gave a signal, seen and understood by his own men, but unobserved by their opponents.

In obedience to this signal, Tom Lightfoot, who usually dropped back, ran well out toward the right end of the Cranford line, making a pretense of hurrying to get something he had dropped there, and not being given time, in the quick lineup, to get back into position.

Tidewater had never seen that play, though it had been worked out carefully by Cranford for a time of need like this, when moments were precious and the team was in a tight place.

Phil was calling the signals, sharply and keenly. Tom was apparently hurrying to get back behind the line, though making this movement merely to be on-side when the ball came to him.

The ball came back quickly from Connie, who was a good center; and then, with a powerful and sure swing, Phil swung it right out to Tom.

Tom caught it, turning like a flash. Then he tucked it under his arm and made a great jump with it round the end of Tidewater.

"Hold 'em!" Phil yelled, leaping toward him.

Cranford was manfully, even desperately, trying to hold back the Tidewater rushers.

Saul Messenger, right end, swung in with Tom, thus again putting his pugilistic shoulders between the runner with the ball and the Tidewater players; and Phil, dashing in now and breaking through there, ran at Saul's side.

Jubal swung in from the left end of the Cranford line, running to get into position also as interference.

Seeing that the runner had got by the end with the ball, the Tidewater rush line broke near the center like a rotten rope, and the individual members comprising it tried to do something to keep the ball from being carried over the line.

But Tom had a fair start now; and, running with his interference, he dodged the would-be tacklers, and carried the ball over safely.

When it was brought out, Lafe Lampton held it for

Phil, while the Tidewater line stood back, ready to dash at the ball as soon as Lafe let it touch the ground; then Lafe released it, and, with a clean swing of his foot, as Tidewater rushed, Phil kicked it over the bar.

"We can still tie the thing!" cried Kid Casey, desperately.

The ball was taken hurriedly to the center of the field.

But it was no more than placed for the kick-off when the whistle blew that announced the expiration of the time limit for the second half of the game.

And Cranford had won under Phil Kirtland—the score being twelve for Cranford and six for Tidewater.

"That was all right!" cried Jack, catching Phil by the hand and congratulating him. "That was good generalship and fine work. It won the game for Cranford."

CHAPTER XII.

THANKSGIVING.

All through the forenoon of Thanksgiving Day there was no busier young fellow in Cranford than Lafe Lampton.

A Thanksgiving dinner was to be served at his home to the members of the Cranford eleven and their friends.

Lafe had personally extended the invitations, and they had been accepted by nearly everyone.

Though skilled cooks were called in for this occasion, Lafe insisted on doing some of the cooking himself, and he made sure that everything was just as it should be.

There was never any doubt that Lafe was a judge in such matters. He could have given points in a good many things to the high-priced chefs of city hotels.

The turkeys were done to a turn, being stuffed with oysters, after the Southern style; and the cranberry sauce looked truly appetizing. Everything that properly should go with a Thanksgiving dinner was there. And Lafe saw that it was put on the tables in an appetizing manner.

The house was hardly large enough for the crowd

of young people that came; for not only the eleven, but the substitutes, together with many of their "best girls," were present.

Kate Strawn, Nellie Conner, Daisy Lightfoot, and many others of the attractive young misses of Cranford "graced the occasion," as Lafe said afterward; and, to the delight of Ned Skeen, sweet Susie Powers, of the golden hair, came over from Cardiff, to make one of that dinner party.

As high-school boys and girls and academy boys and girls were there, all in the gayest of spirits, it seemed that the long-sought era of warm friendship between the two schools had at last been inaugurated.

There were several toasts.

One of them was:

"To Phil Kirtland, whose good generalship did so much to win the game for Cranford."

It was proposed by Jack Lightfoot, who seemed to have almost recovered from the results of that murderous attack of Kid Casey.

Another, proposed by Phil, was:

"To the Cranford eleven—may they maintain their record as the Never-Defeated!"

There was much chattering of tongues round those tables, much laughter and merriment, and perhaps some flirtation, where a boy and a girl sat close together, which deserves no especial mention in this record of athletic deeds.

Just as the feasting ended, Phil Kirtland rose in his seat.

"Speech! speech!" some one shouted, as Phil was seen to rise.

Phil laughed good-naturedly.

"It's to be no speech." He took something out of his pocket and held it up in an envelope. "I haven't any speech to make, but here is a hundred dollars that seems to have no owner."

"Give it to me!" yelled Jubal. "All money that other folks don't claim kin come my way, and I'll take care of it."

"This money was given to me by Ben Nelson, of the Tidewater eleven. Most of you know of that funny mistake he made, and how he tried to bribe me. He says now that it's all a lie—that he never tried to

bribe me, and, in fact, had no talk with me here on that subject. So that makes me out a liar, and leaves the money in my hands."

Several faces had flushed somewhat, among them Lily Livingston's. She almost knew what was coming next.

"There's a young fellow in this town who, I understood, put up a part of this money; but he, too, denies the whole thing, and says he doesn't know anything about it. So, you see, the money doesn't seem to have any owner."

"Give it to me!" yelled Jubal again. "All orphan money, without any parents to take care of it, I'll adopt, by ginger!"

Phil went on, ignoring noisy Jubal:

"So now, as this seems to be a case in which I have money which certainly does not belong to me, and nobody claims, I'm going to present it to the Cranford eleven, to do with as they see fit. There is always something coming up to be purchased or repaired, and a little money to be used in that way comes handy."

The members of the eleven and their friends rose round the tables and applauded.

Phil flushed and looked happy.

"Hurrah for Phil Kirtland—three cheers!" cried Jack.

Those three cheers were given with so much will that Mrs. Lampton, Lafe's mother, and some of the other women, and also some of the girls, put their hands over their ears to shut out that burst of noisy sound.

"Thanks," said Phil, smiling, "it's nice to buy applause with money that belongs to some one else. But I accept it, you know, just as an indication of general good will."

* * * * *

There was another Thanksgiving dinner in Cranford that day, which presented a vastly different scene.

Only two persons attended it, and they were Reel Snodgrass and Delancy Shelton. Reel had refused to go down to Lampton's, though he had received an invitation. He felt sure something would be said about that money, and about Delancy. And Delancy had at last privately admitted to him his guilt in the matter.

Delancy sat in an easy-chair, feeling too much crippled to go down to the regular hotel dinner; and because Reel wanted to be with him, the meal for the two was brought up to Delancy's rooms.

It was appetizing, yet Delancy had no appetite. He felt worse physically than immediately after receiving that punishment at the hands of the toughs hired by Ben Nelson. He was sore in every muscle and joint of his body. There were some strips of court plaster on his face, and one eye was still swollen and blackened.

"I don't want anything," he said, pettishly, as he looked at the things that had been brought in and placed before him. "And what have I got to be thankful for, y' know?"

"Everything," Reel replied; "you're rich as Croesus, for one thing. With the money you've got any fellow could be happy."

Delancy groaned as he shifted his bruised legs and felt a twinge of pain.

"Well, yes, that's so, I guess; so I take it back. Money's the thing that moves the world, don't y' know, and I wish I had more of it. If I'm not happy, it's my own fault, y' know; so here goes to be happy."

"The fellow that can't find something to be glad for on this day is a mighty unfortunate sort of chap, and likely doesn't deserve much happiness," was Reel's sensible statement. "So, here goes! If we can't be as happy as we'd like, we'll be as happy as we can."

And they felt better, under that sentiment, and ate their Thanksgiving dinner with something like satisfaction.

Yet the contrast between those two Thanksgiving dinners could not have been much greater.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 43, will be "Jack Lightfoot's Great Kick; or, The Tackle That Did Not Work." This is another lively football story, of the kind you like, with the Cranford eleven doing great work on the gridiron, and Jack Lightfoot leading them in the struggle. There is something in it, too, besides football—a story that you will enjoy.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach." No. 28, "How to Umpire." No. 29, "How to Manage Players." No. 30, "Baseball Points." No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training." No. 39, "The Men in the Line." No. 40, "The Men Behind." No. 41, "Signal Systems."

TEAM PLAY.

In our talk in this column last week we discussed various methods of signals from the standpoint of somewhat experienced players, for it ought to be as plain as daylight to the boys who have been trying to learn how to play football for several weeks that a good game is not put up by a lot of boys who have been amusing themselves by tumbling about on a gridiron for twenty or thirty days, but by a team of earnest players who have practiced steadily together, and who look upon their play as a method of welding together an aggregation of fellows who can go up against other teams, and gain by shrewd, careful work, in which brain has quite as much to do with the score as brawn.

In other words, football is like baseball as far as the players go; each and every man must work, and must work for points; and in order to do that, he must understand the game. Luck does not accomplish very much for the vast majority of us in this world. Work and brains are the things that tell in the long run, and the combination is never more effective than on the diamond and the gridiron.

Work hard, work intelligently, and you'll score, unless the other fellows work harder and more intelligently. The only way you can protect yourself against loss is never to let the other fellows work harder and think quicker. And the only way you can do that is to work hard together and to think hard individually.

If you do that the final games of the season will be the winners for you, and to help you to gain when gains count is our excuse for these talks. That is why we talk to you seriously, why we left it to your judgment to select the best system of signals in our last week's discussion, and why we propose to devote a little time to a general talk on team play to-day.

Team play is the rock on which a good many teams come to grief. The fellows may know how to play, each in his position. They may understand fully just what they are there for, and some of them may be brilliant players. But when it comes to working together, the team goes to smash, and is knocked into such fine splinters that you'd have to sweep the field to get even a little heap of dead wood. Team play means that every man works for his team's advancement, and works with every other man on the eleven for the general good. If the boys do not understand team play, no matter how brilliant some of the players may be, they cannot save the ship.

That is where Harvard went to pieces last year in the game with Yale. The men were good, hard players, but they could not work together, and they owed everything they got, in one of the most pitiful exhibitions of incompetency ever seen, to the work of one man, Hurley. He scored, Harvard didn't, and, able, brilliant player as he is, he could do but little with his team.

On the other hand, team play has made the Army—West Point team—what it is; one of the toughest propositions players ever stacked up against. Made up of indifferent material, limited in its time for practice, the little bunch of men from the war college can, by its excellence of team play, worry a big university team more than some of its more famous adversaries.

If you want your team to succeed, follow the Army's footsteps; work up your team play until every man knows the meaning of the term, and lives up to it. Then you have a team that is worth something, and not until then.

Take the line as one step in this development. Center and guards must work together. It isn't enough for each man to take care of the opponent he is playing against. The three men should work together against the trio in front of them. Should one of these latter prove more dangerous than any of the others, the members of the offensive team should work together to put him out of business so far as his superiority in the play goes. Supposing the man against left guard is a giant; center should give left guard a little help in taking care of his man.

The same is true of tackles and ends—they should assist one another. The backs must help out this spirit by working hard and following up every advantage gained by the line, so that the line will feel perfectly confident that its efforts are appreciated.

If, for instance, the runner bucks the line between left tackle and left end, and left tackle and left end are not only prompt in getting their men out of the way, but get through the breach and ward off the defense's backs so as to give the runner plenty of working room, while the runner, being slow or stupid so as not to profit by the line's work, loses a couple of valuable seconds, and, getting to the breach after the opponents have recovered from the attack, is held right there, then, naturally, that makes the line discouraged and takes the vim out of its playing. What's the use of working for a dead horse?

Then if the runner does his duty and the line men do theirs, but the backs' interference is slow and stupid, even the most puritanical and careful of us wants to vent his wrath in choice terms. A football team is a machine, and if any part breaks down in work, it effects the whole mechanism. If a bicycle were human, and the chain broke on a test run, don't you suppose that the other parts of the machine would be mad at the chain?

The runner must also do his share of team work. After he gets through the line he must study how to go on—think like a shot—and how to make the best use of his interference. Sometimes, when the field before him has a good many enemies, he ought to slow down a bit, in order to let his interference catch up, and dodge just enough to give his aids the right opportunity to put his particular opponents out of the way.

If he does this cleverly, he will have a clear field before him, and his leg muscles and his wind will mean a touch-down. The backs must help him. They must not only ward off the first attacks, but they should catch up with

(Continued on page 30.)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

Being a reader of ALL-SPORTS WEEKLY, I take the liberty to ask a few questions. Age, 17 years; weight, 128 pounds; height, 5 feet 6 inches; waist, 30 inches; chest, 33¼ inches; expanded, 36 inches; thighs, right, 20½ inches; left, 20 inches; calf, 13 inches; ankle, 8½ inches; hips, 35 inches; arm, 10½ inches; forearm, 10 inches; wrist, 6¾ inches; neck, 13¾ inches; reach, 66 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. Where are my weak spots? Can put twenty-five-pound shot twenty feet. How is that? 3. How can I strengthen my legs? Thanking you in advance,

A. AIRY.

Pittsburg, Pa.

You are considerably above the average in weight, but somewhat deficient in your chest. We should say that the feat you mention is very good indeed. Bicycle exercise is good for strengthening and toughening the muscles of the legs; likewise, walking and running.

One thing I have noticed with reference to your fine little weekly, and that is, everybody seems pleased. Looking over the back numbers and the Chat pages, I have been really surprised to find how unanimous your correspondents were about calling it the best ever, and sounding its praises. You certainly have good reason to be proud of that fact. Indeed, the only thing approaching a "kick" that I have been able to find is a complaint that it is too short—that one reads it so eagerly, a feeling of disappointment follows when "The End" bobs up so soon. Well, that is, I think, a pretty good fault. And a boy never got better value for his nickel than in purchasing a copy of ALL-SPORTS. Besides, the contents from cover to cover seem to be upon such a high moral plane that any boy must be the better morally as well as physically for reading one of the Lightfoot stories. You wonder at a fellow of just twenty writing such things, but I've been around a little, and know what I'm saying. Put me down as a lifelong admirer of your publication. I could not ask a better treat for a rainy day than a file of ALL-SPORTS and a quiet nook in the attic where nothing would bother me, unless it was the sound of the dinner gong.

ATHLETIC TOM.

Milwaukee, Wis.

We take pleasure in printing your letter entire, because you voice the sentiments of many among our boy friends and readers. We also think we are giving full value to every purchaser of ALL-SPORTS, though we expect to always keep on the alert to improve the looks or contents of our publication. Write again when you feel like it—such letters are always acceptable.

Will you please tell me how my measurements are and if I could improve myself in any way? I seem to be in pretty good shape, only a few things I like to eat don't agree with me, and I suffer some with my stomach. I am 17 years old and 5 feet 8½ inches high. My weight just now is 137 pounds, though last spring I tipped the scales at 143. Around the chest, 37½ inches; waist, 27 inches; calves, 14 inches, and hips, 36 inches. I like your paper more every week, and I'd miss it very much

if unable to get my copy. You can count on my being a reader to the last call, and whenever I get a chance I put in a few good words for it. I think Mr. Stevens would be hard to beat as a writer for boys.

RUFUS TAYLOR, JR.

Providence, R. I.

Your measurements are very good, indeed. About the stomach trouble, we must warn you, however, since it is a serious matter for a boy of seventeen to be weak in that respect. As a usual thing a boy can eat and digest anything short of what an ostrich might manage, or a goat. Let the articles of food that do not agree with you severely alone. You do not name them, but we can easily guess that cucumbers, melons and such things figure among them. An ordinary amount of healthy exercise, coupled with some watchfulness as to the food you eat, ought to keep you in fine condition physically. Your chest would indicate that you are the possessor of a sound pair of lungs, of which you should be proud. We thank you for the nice things you say of ALL-SPORTS, and hope you will spread the good tidings far and wide that there is a weekly devoted wholly to boys' sports, which they need never blush to own.

I live away up in Canada, and it may surprise you to know you have an enthusiastic reader in this section. Of course ALL-SPORTS would be more popular in Canada if Jack Lightfoot and his friends were Canadians, and the scenes of the stories located here, but I am quite satisfied to get it just as it is. A cousin of mine down at Detroit sent me the first copy of your famous little weekly I had ever seen, and wrote that he guessed I would like it. Well, I did, and a week later sent in a subscription. And now, to tell the truth, I couldn't "keep house," as they say, without it. We have considerable sport around this region most of the time, but mostly in winter. Then Lake Simcoe is frozen, and we enjoy skating, coasting, snowshoeing, toboggan riding and fishing through the ice, while some hunt the big king of the Canada bush, the lordly moose. I'd like to have Jack and Tom and Lafe up here a season. Probably there would be something doing. They make up a crowd such as I would like very much to know. The baseball stories interested me least of any, because we do not know very much about baseball away up in this Canadian wilderness; but there were plenty of other things going on in those stories to interest even a young Canuck. I wish you great success, because it seems to me that a lively, wide-awake paper like ALL-SPORTS should do a great amount of good among boys, setting them a fine example of young manhood which they would do well to pattern after.

SANDY McBETH.

Barrie, Canada.

This letter speaks so well for itself that really we have no remarks to make, save to thank the writer sincerely.

I have read every number of your winner, namely, the ALL-SPORTS, and hope my opinion of Jack, his friends and enemies will get through the mill in a condition to be printed.

Jack, though I need not say it, is my favorite. For second place, Tom, Kirt and Brodie have equal chances, with Lafe a close fifth. The others, Nervous Ned, Jiu-Jitsu Nat, Money-Making Jube, Spindle-Shanked Wilson and Fighting Saul Messenger, together with the strong Brewster brothers and Mack Remington, newspaper correspondent, make a "swell" set. They are, mostly, all to the good, and are, moreover, true to life. Mesmeric Reel Snodgrass is no back number, either. Wait! he's no favorite of mine, but it is to be hoped that Borlamo will lose all control over him and that he—Reel—will see the error of his ways and try to reform.

Except as a helper in the story, Delancy is no good, and the same may be said of Birkett. But, as a whole, Mr. Stevens' cast is one of which an author has a right to be proud.

By this I do not mean that the ALL-SPORTS is the best ever,

for I believe in telling the truth in any serious matter, and this may be serious to more than one—*Tip Top* is the king. I know that Mr. Stevens will not care for this, as dear "Ole Burt L." has had nine years' experience, while Mr. Maurice has had but nine months. Over all other weeklies or monthlies, and, indeed, all novels, I hold up for Frank Merriwell and Yale! Yale! Why cannot Jack go to Yale? Just think, the principal characters in the two best books ever published both in Yale. If Jack and Dick Merriwell could only meet in Yale there would be sports and fair rivalry such as has never before been set before Young America!

But in my enthusiasm I've certainly forgotten about the gentler sex. They are a fair set; many will agree with me in this, if in nothing else. Jack is too young to think of matrimony yet, but I think he leans, to a small degree, toward Nellie, though, for myself, I have a slight preference for Kate. Daisy is, I think, a sort of medium holding Jack and Phil together. Lily should not lean so much on Shelton.

Now that I stop to think for the first time, this is almost sure to be captured by Mr. Wastebasket.

Hoping that there are those who will be so kind as to exchange postals or to correspond with me, I close, with three times three cheers for Mr. Stevens and The Winner,

H. ARTHUR COLLINS.

1915 North Seventh Street, Terre Haute, Ind.

This is a very nice letter. We are under obligations to you, Arthur. And when you put the young ALL-SPORTS in the same class as the veteran favorite, *Tip Top*, you are paying us a high compliment indeed.

Will you please answer these questions from a reader of ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY? 1. Can I buy all the back numbers of your publication, and must I send the money to you, or order same through some dealer? 2. Has Maurice Stevens ever written for boys outside of ALL-SPORTS? I want to know, because I don't seem able to place him, and yet he seems too good to be a new hand with the pen. 3. How is my weight—one hundred and seventeen pounds—for a fourteen-year-old boy, just five feet five inches high? I shall hope to see the answers in your Chat columns soon,

WILLIAM MCKENZIE.

Paterson, N. J.

1. You can either send direct to us, giving a list of the numbers desired, and inclosing five cents in stamps for each copy desired; or, if more convenient, have a dealer send to his news company for them.

2. Maurice Stevens is an old and experienced writer, who has done much good work under another name. If we dared to betray his confidence, and tell you something we know about his work in the past you would readily understand that he ranks high with all the tiptop writers of the day, who make a specialty of juvenile work. When you speak of authors using the pen, it makes us hark back to the good old days of long ago. Nowadays every author we know of manipulates a typewriter or dictates his work.

3. Yes, your weight is very good.

I don't want you to think, Mr. Editor, that I'm trying to criticise at all, but I merely make a suggestion with regard to something that might add to the popularity of your little publication. Boys seem never to get tired of reading stories about school life, and if you could have Jack and some of his friends attend a preparatory school, with the idea of going to college later, in my humble opinion the stories would be just great. I can see what great stunts Mr. Stevens would conjure up for that hustling crowd to do at school, and I feel certain there are many thousands of readers besides myself who would be delighted to see the boys under such conditions. Won't you please ask the clever author of the Lightfoot stories if he can't make up his mind to do this? I believe it would be good policy. I know of other publications that have made a great hit with school stories, and I guess you do, too. They could come back to Cranford at vacation times, so that it would not be taking them away altogether from the old scenes. Do this favor for me, please. I am always talking in praise of ALL-SPORTS, and I've gotten you quite a few readers among my friends.

WALTER HIGBIE.

Babylon, L. I.

We are always glad to have suggestions sent in good faith by our readers, for it shows that they are deeply interested in their favorite weekly. We aim to please the vast majority, and if we but knew what the great number of boys really wanted, we would be only too glad to give them the same. What you mention has already been discussed with Mr. Stevens, and it is more than likely that something along those lines may be adopted by him. We leave that pretty much to his discretion, for he knows boys like a book, and can be safely trusted to do the right thing that will please—you know that from the character of stories he has given you.

("How to do Things")—Continued from page 28.

the runner and perform their work of disposing of the pitfalls behind the line. Perhaps the runner has got through all right and meets a couple of dangerous tacklers. If the interference is there to drag him through, well, the grand stand will yell itself hoarse. That's good play; team play.

That is, from the moment the ball is in play, every man should not only do his personal duty, but should try and get it done well and quickly enough to go on and help the runner. It's not enough to handle the man—in the line—you're playing against so as to prevent him getting through before the ball has reached the runner and he has started on his run, but you want to get him out of the way and also go to the assistance of the runner.

In defense, the same spirit should be manifest. Every player must do his individual best to block the play, and must, in addition, help out the other players in a united effort to hold the opposition.

So in watching the enemy. The captain's eyes cannot be everywhere. There are ten other pairs of eyes on the team. If they are all watching, and if one discovers some dangerous tactic, the knowledge should be immediately given to the team. Keep awake all the time.

Perhaps a better suggestion for team play could not be given than "keep awake"! A football team has no use for a sleepy or lazy fellow any more than it has for a man who will sacrifice his team in order to do some particularly showy trick to win the applause of the grand stand; in other words, "play to the gallery." Every man must play for all he is worth all the time he is playing; must work and think hard and quickly, and the whole team must strive as one man. If there is any fellow on the team who refuses to do this, kick him out, no matter how clever he may be. Kick him out the way you play, quick and hard; so quick and so hard that he will land in the next lot with a good bump. You don't want him, and if it is fully understood that a well-directed kick awaits the man who does not come up to expectations when he's needed—and he's needed all the time—you'll get team play.

You remember the saying of the founders of this country, "In union there is strength," and you know that long and terrible period in which that doctrine received its baptism of blood. Well, in the American game of football that America-proved rule is as necessary a guide to conduct as in anything else. Work well, work together, forget yourself in the interest of your brothers on the team, and you will be able to score. If you do not follow the rule, "In union there is strength," you will be defeated as sure as our forefathers would have been unable to successfully cut loose from the all-powerful British empire and establish this land we all love.

STIRRING SEA TALES

PAUL JONES WEEKLY

Stories of the adventures of the gallant American hero, Paul Jones, in the battles he had with the British men-'o-war, during the Revolution.

The history of his brave deeds forms some of the most interesting and brilliant pages in American history, and the stories which appear in the "Paul Jones Weekly" are so fascinating and full of the spirit of patriotism that no real boy can resist the temptation to read them.

LIST OF TITLES

1. Paul Jones' Cruise for Glory ; or, The Sign of the Coiled Rattlesnake
 2. Paul Jones at Bay ; or, Striking a Blow for Liberty
 3. Paul Jones' Pledge ; or, The Tiger of the Atlantic
 4. Paul Jones' Bold Swoop ; or, Cutting Out a British Supply Ship
 5. Paul Jones' Strategy ; or, Outwitting the Fleets of Old England
 6. Paul Jones' Long Chase ; or, The Last Shot in the Locker
 7. Out With Paul Jones ; or, Giving Them a Bad Fright Along the English Coast
 8. Paul Jones Afloat and Ashore ; or, Stirring Adventures in London Town
-
-

PRICE, FIVE CENTS

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent postpaid by the publishers upon receipt of price

The Winner Library Co., 165 West 15th St., New York

COME BOYS, COME GET THE ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

"Teach the American boy how to become an athlete and so lay the foundation of a constitution greater than that of the United States."
—Wise Sayings from Tip Top.

YOU like fun, adventure and mystery, don't you? Well, you can find them all in the pages of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. As the name implies, the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY is devoted to the sports that all young people delight in. It has bright, handsome, colored covers, and each story is of generous length. You are looking for a big five cents worth of good reading and you can get it here. Ask your newsdealer for any of the titles listed below. He has them in stock. Be sure to get ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. Like other good things it has its imitations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 16—Jack Lightfoot's Strategy; or, Hare-and-Hounds Over Cranford Hills. | 33—Jack Lightfoot's Cleverness; or, The Boy Who Butted In. |
| 17—Jack Lightfoot in the Saddle; or, A Jockey for Just One Day. | 34—Jack Lightfoot's Decision; or, That Chestnut of "Playing Against Ten Men." |
| 18—Jack Lightfoot's Dilemma; or, A Traitor on the Diamond. | 35—Jack Lightfoot, Pennant-Winner; or, Wind-ing up the Four Town League. |
| 19—Jack Lightfoot's Cyclone Finish; or, How Victory Was Snatched From Defeat. | 36—Jack Lightfoot's Pledge; or, Bound in Honor. |
| 20—Jack Lightfoot in Camp; or, Young Athletes at Play in the Wilderness. | 37—Jack Lightfoot's Nerve; or, A Desperate Mutiny at the "Gym." |
| 21—Jack Lightfoot's Disappearance; or, The Turning-up of an Old Enemy. | 38—Jack Lightfoot's Halfback; or, Playing the Giants of the League. |
| 22—Jack Lightfoot's "Stone Wall" Infield; or, Making a Reputation in the League. | 39—Jack Lightfoot's Gridiron Boys; or, Leading a Patched-up Team to Victory. |
| 23—Jack Lightfoot's Talisman; or, The Only Way to Win Games in Baseball. | 40—Jack Lightfoot's Trap Shooting; or, Up Against the Champions of the Gun Club. |
| 24—Jack Lightfoot's Mad Auto Dash; or, Speed-ing at a Ninety Mile Clip. | 41—Jack Lightfoot's Touch-down; or, A Hard Nut to Crack at Highland. |
| 25—Jack Lightfoot Afloat; or, The Cruise of the Canvas Canoes. | 42—Jack Lightfoot's Flying Wedge; or, How Kirtland Won the Game for Cranford. |
| 26—Jack Lightfoot's Hard Luck; or, A Light-nig Triple Play in the Ninth. | 43—Jack Lightfoot's Great Kick; or, The Tackle That Did Not Work. |
| 27—Jack Lightfoot's Iron Arm; or, How the New "Spit" Ball Worked the Charm. | 44—Jack Lightfoot's Duck-Blind; or, A Strange Mystery of the Swamp. |
| 28—Jack Lightfoot on the Mat; or, The Jiu-jitsu Trick that Failed to Work. | 45—Jack Lightfoot's Luck; or, Glorious Days of Sport Ahead. |
| 29—Jack Lightfoot's All-Sports Team; or, How Lafe Lampton Threw the Hammer. | 46—Jack Lightfoot's Triumph; or, Back from a Watery Grave. |
| 30—Jack Lightfoot in the Box; or, The Mascot that "Hoodooed" the Nine. | 47—Jack Lightfoot Down in Dixie; or, The Voyage of a Single-Hand Cruiser. |
| 31—Jack Lightfoot's Lucky Find; or, The New Man Who Covered "Short." | 48—Jack Lightfoot's Plans; or, Wrecked on In-dian River. |
| 32—Jack Lightfoot, Archer; or, The Strange Secret an Arrow Revealed. | 49—Jack Lightfoot on Spowshoes; or, The Chase of the Great Moose. |
| | 50—Jack Lightfoot Snowed-Up; or, Lost in the Trackless Canadian Wilderness. |

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

: : : For Sale by all Newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, upon receipt of price by publishers : : :

WINNER LIBRARY CO., 165 West Fifteenth St., NEW YORK

BUY IT AT ONCE

“Teach the American boy how to become an athlete and so lay the foundation of a constitution greater than that of the United States.” — Wise sayings from Tip Top.

WE think that the above quotation from the famous Tip Top Weekly tells, in a few words, just what the *All-Sports Library* is attempting to do. We firmly believe that if the American boy of to-day can only be made to realize how surely the *All-Sports Library* will give him an insight into all matters relating to athletics, our library will attain the mightiest circulation reached by any publication for boys.

IT would be hard to find a boy who is not interested in athletics to some extent. All our schools have baseball, hockey, football and track teams and when these teams play their rivals, interest runs high indeed. Then, too,

many of our boys have bicycles, some have boats, others like fishing and shooting.

ALL of these sports will be carefully dealt with in the *All-Sports Library*. The stories will deal with the adventures of plucky lads while indulging in healthy pastimes and should be read, therefore, by every boy who wants to learn all that is new in the various games and sports in which he is interested.

LIKE all other good things *The All-Sports Library* has its imitations. We warn our boys to be careful not to be taken in by these counterfeits. Be sure to get *The All-Sports Library* as no other can compare with it.

For sale by all news-dealers, or sent, postpaid, by the publishers upon receipt of price.

PRICE

5

Cents

THE WINNER LIBRARY COMPANY, 165 West Fifteenth Street, NEW YORK